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# The “Beach People” Take Flight: Inventing the Airplane and Modernizing the Outer Banks of North Carolina, 1900-1932

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# The “Beach People” Take Flight:

Inventing the Airplane and Modernizing the  
Outer Banks of North Carolina, 1900-1932

Bryan Patterson  
History Honors Thesis, 2008

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## Acknowledgements

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The thorough and supportive comments from Professor Catherine Stock, Ph.D., and Professor Lisa Wilson, Ph.D., both of the Connecticut College History Department, gave me the confidence and direction to complete this large task of writing an honors thesis. In particular, Professor Stock encouraged me to write this thesis after I first took one of her classes in my junior year. The experience has been an extremely rewarding and fulfilling one, so for the opportunity to write a thesis, I am indebted to Professor Stock's encouragement.

My mom, dad, and brother Derrick deserve a great deal of love and thanks for the sacrifices they have made to allow me to attend such a great institution like Connecticut College. My dad drove me four hours to the Wright Brothers National Monument and Outer Banks History Center on a random summer day, because he knew that the project meant so much to me. My whole family has shown great patience in my complaints

along the way about how hard it was to write a thesis, so thank you guys! My excitements for this project only made them want to help me and encourage me more.

There are two teachers that need to be thanked for sparking my deep interest in American History. My love of American History started at the Brooks School in North Andover, Massachusetts, when I took Advanced Placement United States History with Mr. Lance Latham. His passion for history and style of teaching made me want to pursue a history degree in college and I thank him for that. In addition, Mr. John Morris of the Brooks School believed in the substance and quality of my writing, as he was the first history teacher to call one of my major history research papers “commendable” on every level.

I would most like to thank the “beach people” and the surfmen of the Outer Banks in the early twentieth century whose undying assistance allowed for the Wright brothers to achieve international fame and fortune for inventing flight. The story of their assistance has gone largely unnoticed for over one hundred years, and people should know that they are just as much responsible for the invention of flight as Wilbur and Orville Wright. The interactions between the surfmen and the Wright brothers, the synthesis of two very different societies and cultures in Dayton, Ohio, and Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, is the thing that most inspired me to write about this topic. My own transplant from northwestern Pennsylvania to North Carolina certainly inspired me to tackle this subject, as the transition is a culturally shocking but delightful one.

-Bryan Patterson

# **Introduction**

## **The Wright Brothers Background and Initial Place in Aviation**

Over the last one hundred years the personalities of Wilbur and Orville Wright seem to have merged into a single entity. Nobody would talk about Orville today, without talking about what Wilbur was doing at the same point. The brothers, from the time they were children, lived together, played together, worked together, and thought together. When it came to the invention of flight, it was Wilbur's idea to build their first glider, but Orville came up with the most breakthrough ideas. The partnership that existed between the Wright brothers created an atmosphere that was conducive for creativity and invention. The brothers gave off vibes of focus and dedication that inspired people and persuaded the people around them to believe in what the brothers were doing.<sup>1</sup>

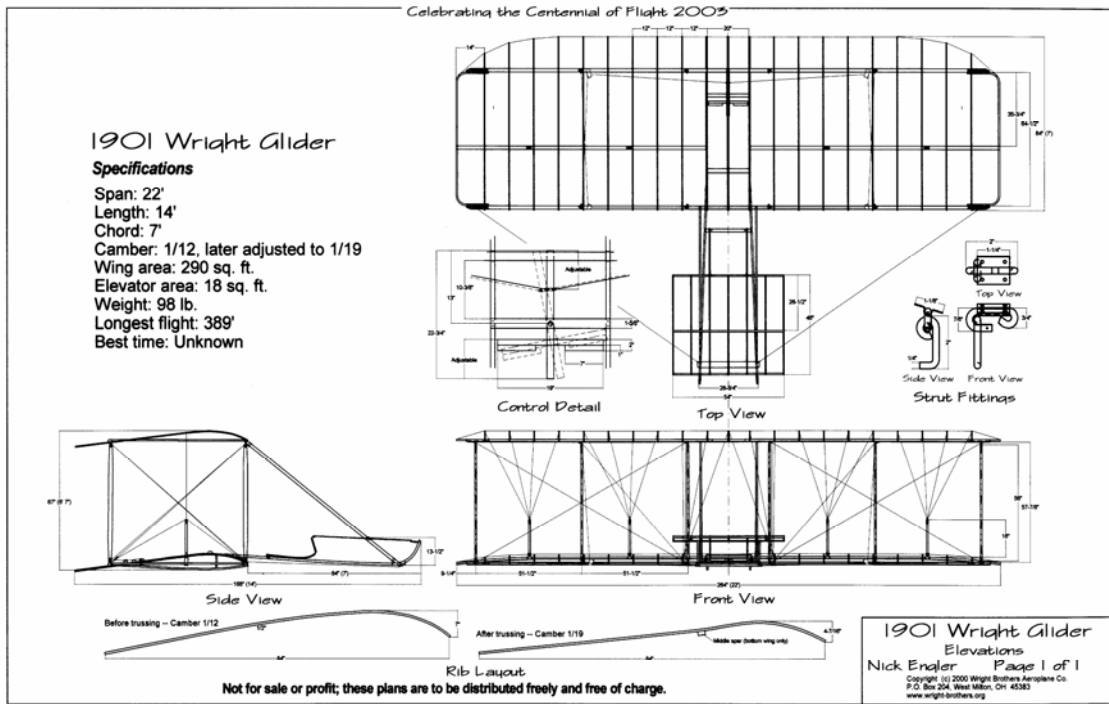
Wilbur and Orville were first introduced to flight in 1878 when their father brought home a rubber-band-powered helicopter that he had picked up while traveling around giving sermons. Milton Wright, a bishop in the United Brethren Church, picked up all kinds of toys for his children in his travels all over the Midwest. The Wrights were inspired to study flight by the work of German scientist Otto Lilienthal around 1896. The German inventor's glider flights could be seen in countless photographs in newspapers and magazines showing him hovering over the ground for almost a half-minute.<sup>2</sup> The young Wright brothers were growing up in Dayton, Ohio, and combining the ideas of Lilienthal's gliders, Samuel Langley's Aerodrome (worked at the Smithsonian Institute), and Octave Chanute's glides in the Indiana sand dunes along Lake Michigan.<sup>3</sup> Lilienthal

was the world's premier glider designer, however, in 1891 he was killed in one of his famous glider flights just to the north of Berlin.

The Wright brothers were self-taught aeronautical engineers as they requested information on aeronautics from the Smithsonian Institute and built upon that knowledge. The initial aeronautical engineers were successful at flying kites, parachutes, gliders, and all other lighter-than-air crafts, but they had to take off over cliffs or ramps that were facing down steep hills. The initial designs of these scientists had poor lift to drag ratios, so once they left the ground the flying machines would either nose dive or move very slowly at low altitudes.<sup>4</sup> The Wright brothers gained a great deal of technical knowledge in machines by building their own printing press. They owned a printing press shop right out of high school, but capitalized on the bicycle craze of the 1890s by opening up their own bicycle retail and repair store. The Wrights experimented with the equilibrium of bicycles by adding motors to the back of the bicycles in their free time. These experiments convinced the brothers that a flying machine could be balanced through some kind of equilibrium, the way a bike will not tip over when you slightly turn the handle bars.<sup>5</sup>

The fundamental breakthrough of the "three-axis control" is the big invention that the Wright brothers are credited with. The "three-axis control" allows the pilot to steer the aircraft effectively while maintaining equilibrium. The "three-axis control" enables pilots to control the pitch, roll, and yaw of the airplane with one control lever. The Wright brothers invented the "three-axis control" when they made the tail and wings of the plane not fixed in one position. The compensation that each wing and the tail of the airplane makes when you turn one way or the other creates a state of equilibrium that

allows the airplane to stay level at a constant speed.<sup>6</sup> The front rudder controls the pitch of the airplane, the roll by wing warping, and the yaw by a movable rudder.



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The Wright brothers perfected the “three-axis control” by conducting wind tunnel tests at the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C. and also at United States Navy Bases all over the Midwest and Eastern seaboard of the United States. The data collected in the wind tunnel tests was some of the most accurate data ever recorded, which enabled the brothers to build the best wings and propeller combinations. Other inventors of the time like Samuel Langley and Octave Chanute were trying to invent more powerful engines, but the Wrights were perfecting actual flight. Once Wilbur and Orville perfected the ability to fly, it was easier to add a mechanical engine in order to increase the power of the aircraft.<sup>8</sup>

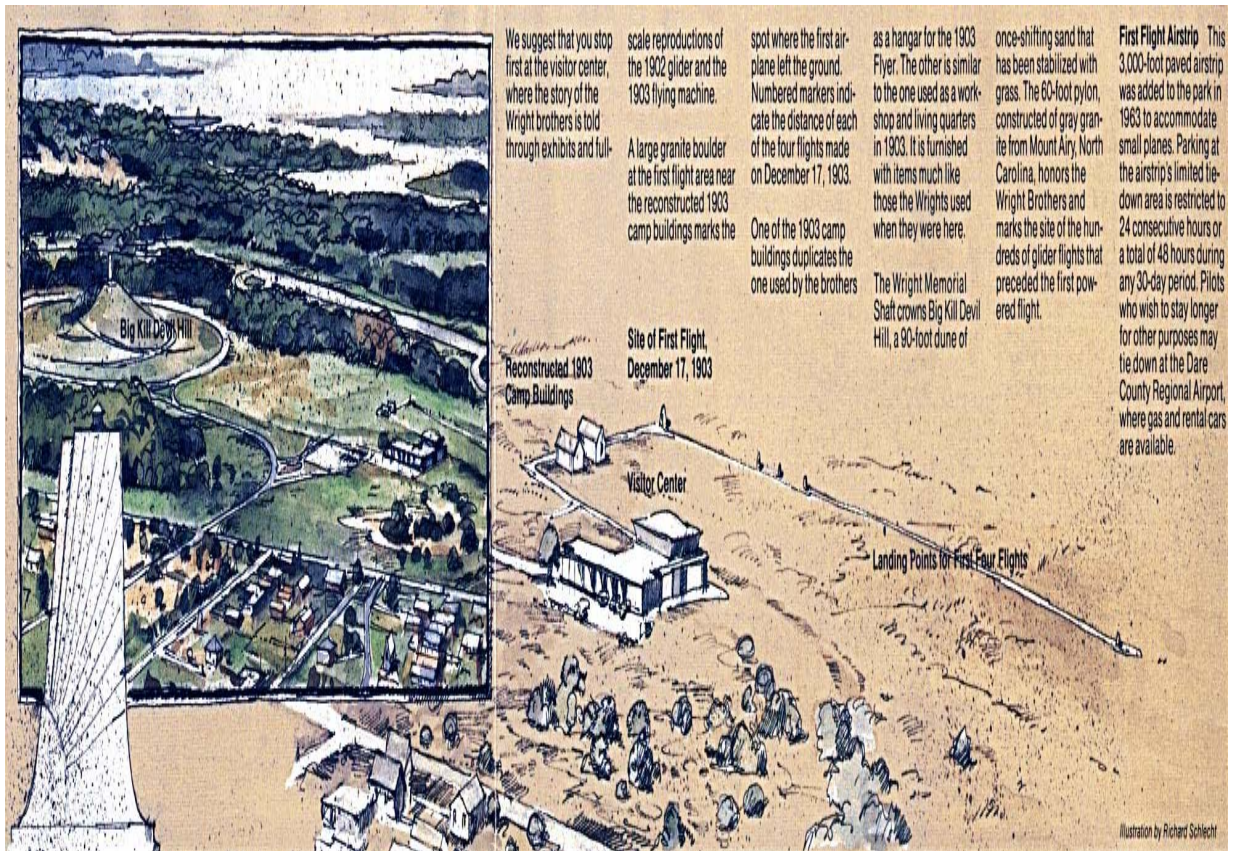


Once the Wright brothers had perfected the “three-axis control” in their 1903 glider the subsequent seasons of invention on the Outer Banks were to continue to take the airplane a step further. The aviation breakthroughs would not have been possible in three short seasons on the Outer Banks if the local “beach people” and surfmen had not assisted them. Once the Wright brothers perfected their airplane design, the aviation business took off at warp speeds. By World War I, the American, British, German, and French militaries had already established Air Forces and Navy airborne fleets to be used in battle and transportation. The commercial airline business was not far behind the military adoption of airplanes in strategic planning and battles. Although Orville was the only Wright brother to see the airplane used on a such a grand scale, the legacy of the Wright brothers invention will always be present in every airplane that is built. The basic “three-axis control” system is still in place on the blueprint of every new airplane that is developed today.

### **Direction of the Thesis**

Heavy rains fell on the Kill Devil Hills Monument throughout the dedication ceremony on November 19, 1932. As a result, the new monument was not looking its best on its first impression to the outside world. At one point, the heavy winds ripped the spectator cover off the raised platform where the podium and first few rows of spectators were situated. A bone-wrenching cold rain quickly drenched many of the visitors of the Wright brothers. The main event of the dedication ceremony was that President Herbert Hoover was present for the entire program. After a short ceremonial speech, he handed the soft-spoken Orville Wright a letter, and Orville simply replied, “Thank you.”<sup>9</sup> It was no surprise that Orville had not prepared a lengthy speech, as he was known to be very

humble. The Kill Devil Hills Monument was renamed the Wright Brothers National Monument in 1953. The renaming of the monument seemed to be a stepping away from the contribution of the Outer Bankers to the invention of human flight. However, through its entire existence it has attempted to embody the mutual exchange that took place between the Wright brothers and the local Outer Bankers that assisted them in every facet of life and invention in North Carolina.<sup>10</sup>



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The Wright brothers' presence on the Outer Banks was the catalyst that sent the Outer Banks region towards modernization. When the Wright brothers arrived in Kitty Hawk in 1900 from Dayton, Ohio, they were stepping back a hundred years into the past. The subsequent modernization of the Kill Devil Hills and Kitty Hawk region that took

place between 1900-1932 (when the monument was built) shows a striking abandonment of continuity of social, political, and economic norms.

The Wright brothers brought an urban sense of time and place to the Outer Banks that encompassed modern skills like time management, punctuality, and specialization. The people on the Outer Banks had subsistence skills something that the Wright brothers lacked. The Wrights helped the local Outer Bankers “modernize” their backward ways, but they taught the brothers how to adapt to the harsh local conditions of the Outer Banks in terms of shelter, food, water, leisure, and outside communication. The story of the local surfmen and “beach people’s” contribution, however, goes largely unnoticed.

This thesis explores the role played by local people on the Outer Banks in both the Wright brothers’ first powered flight and the subsequent modernization of the culture and society in this region of North Carolina. The Wright brothers would not have been as successful in terms of invention and everyday life on the Outer Banks without the assistance of the local Outer Bankers. There was a mutual exchange between the Wright brothers and the local Outer Bankers. The Wright brothers helped lift the Outer Banks out of its isolation of a century behind mainland North Carolina. This emergence led to a direct rise in commercial development, tourism, media exposure, and economic activity on the Outer Banks. Surprisingly, as well known as the story of the Wright brothers is, the story of the local Outer Bankers and how their society was transformed by the arrival of the Wright brothers has been nearly forgotten. This thesis seeks to put the “beach people” and the Outer Banks region back at the center of this famous early, twentieth-century, American story.

Many historians have recounted the story of the first flight, but only a select few have studied the local surfmen and “beach people” who tirelessly assisted the Wright brothers’ flight endeavors. Two of the most respected works on the Wright brothers are Tom Crouch’s *Bishop’s Boys* and Fred C. Kelly’s biography *The Wright Brothers*, both of which provide an extremely effective narrative in terms of background knowledge and the daily lives of the Wrights.<sup>12</sup> They focus on the technical aspects of the invention of flight. Both of these works, however, tell us nothing about the local Outer Banks people. Crouch disregards the everyday efforts of the surfmen from the Kitty Hawk and Kill Devil Hill lifesaving stations. Some would argue that the local Outer Bankers are left out of this historical narrative, because these people rarely appeared in the diaries and letters of the Wright brothers. This absence, however, demonstrates nothing about their importance.

The two scholars that hint at the Outer Banker’s contribution are Stephen Kirk in his *First in Flight: The Wright Brothers in North Carolina* and Thomas Parramore’s *First to Fly: North Carolina and the Beginnings of Aviation*. My hope is to expand and analyze their findings. Parramore’s chapter entitled “As the Surfmen Tell It” gives the surfmen a voice. Parramore combined local, North Carolina, newspaper accounts of the interactions between the surfmen and the Wrights with the actual letters between both parties. Stephen Kirk’s work is a chronological analysis of the Wright brothers’ time in North Carolina that explains how and why the Wrights took advantage of local assistance to become world-renowned inventors. In both works you can see a modernization process that remains unexplored.

Historians have explored the transformation of the southern economy since the Civil War, but ignored the Outer Banks of North Carolina because the region was an aberration. The Outer Banks was not a self-sustaining, commercial agriculture area. The Outer Banks was a self-sustaining economy that depended on commercial fishing for much of its food and a barter system that allowed debt to be paid off through goods or services. Unlike traditional histories of the South which stress forced labor, absentee-plantation systems, and staple cash crops like tobacco, rice and cotton this was a story of a frontier community. This was a story of a people who supply their own food, perform many odd jobs in order to gain subsistence. In many ways it was a throwback to an early time.<sup>13</sup>

The yeomanry of upcountry Georgia moved from semi-subsistence to commercial agriculturalists after the Civil War in the same way that the Outer Bankers moved from semi-subsistent fisherman to full-blown commercial marketers in the tourist and mainland business areas. Likewise, certain historians have explored the transformation of the Southern economy since the Civil War beginning with Steven Hahn and Jonathan Prude's seminal work from the 1985 collection of essays entitled *The Countryside in the Age of Capitalist Transformation: Essays in the Social History of Rural America*. Historian Steven Hahn in his essay entitled "The 'Unmaking' of the Southern Yeomanry: The Transformation of the Georgia Upcountry, 1860-1890" documents a people from northern Georgia that are also aberrations of Southern history. Hahn asserts that the yeomanry of Georgia had strict kinship networks that tied them together instead of the marketplace. The household was the center of everyday life in upcountry Georgia and the center of economic life. As commercial and industrial capital remained weak in this

part of Georgia for many years these “freeholders” were forced to supplement their incomes by “swapping work.” Entire days and weeks in this area were devoted to court and market days where the people would travel to the county seat or region’s largest urban area in order to stock up on food and necessary supplies.<sup>14</sup> The household was certainly the center of economic life when the Wright brothers arrived at Kitty Hawk, which caused the Outer Banks’ own freeholders to perform many odd jobs in order to supplement their income. The way the Outer Bankers “swapped work” like the Georgia yeomanry suggests that both regions needed some sort of stimulant in order to end their backwardness.<sup>15</sup>

Many of the points that Hahn makes about the Georgia Upcountry could be applied to the Outer Banks up to a decade or two later. Strong kinship networks and not the general economic marketplace, which caused the area to remain underdeveloped, tied the local Outer Bankers together. When the Wright brothers arrived on the Outer Banks they acted as the catalyst that shifted this economy from semi-subsistence based on commercial fishing to real estate development and tourism.<sup>16</sup>

The few historians that have studied the upper South rather than the lower South have not focused on the Outer Banks of North Carolina. The upper South, especially in places like Kitty Hawk, has been neglected by historians because there was no chance for upward social mobility until the Wright brothers literally and figuratively bridged the gap with mainland North Carolina and the rest of the United States. The Outer Banks gave historians no chances to explore the search for the American Dream or the self-made, rich American who came from rags because the people were so far behind the rest of the country. Much of the South after the Civil War was dealing with the rapid extension of

market relations along with mounting incidents of rural unrest, but the Outer Banks did not have this problem. Whether it was the overly white, homogenous population at Kitty Hawk and Kill Devil Hills, for whatever reason, the Outer Banks never moved toward a market economy until the Wright brothers put the region on the map. The upper South was less the common South, because it lacked the entrenched forced labor, large estates, staple agriculture, social hierarchy, and land and merchant capital.

The story of the Outer Banks fits better with the studies that have been done on itinerant commerce and the consequences of Southern exceptionalism in the modern South. Historian Lu Ann Jones, in her article entitled “Gender, Race, and Itinerant Commerce in the Rural New South,” argues that by the start of the twentieth century general stores had sprouted up at every railroad crossing. However, the people who had immediate access to these general stores were the wealthy landowners.<sup>17</sup> The people on the Outer Banks were among the most rural, so they did not have easy access to places like Elizabeth City, North Carolina, where there were regularly scheduled trains.

The itinerant merchants or “peddlers” were able to find a niche in the New South in places like the Outer Banks. The “peddlers” allowed the Outer Banks to have access to manufactured goods from the railroads, as they were essentially traveling salesmen. The local Outer Bankers and surfmen acted as “peddlers” for the Wright brothers. The locals would venture to places like Elizabeth City and Norfolk in order to gather supplies for brothers who would compensate the person with a substantial sum of money. These “rolling stores” were a way for the people on the Outer Banks to buy needed goods, but also acted as a form of entertainment for visitors like the Wright brothers.<sup>18</sup>

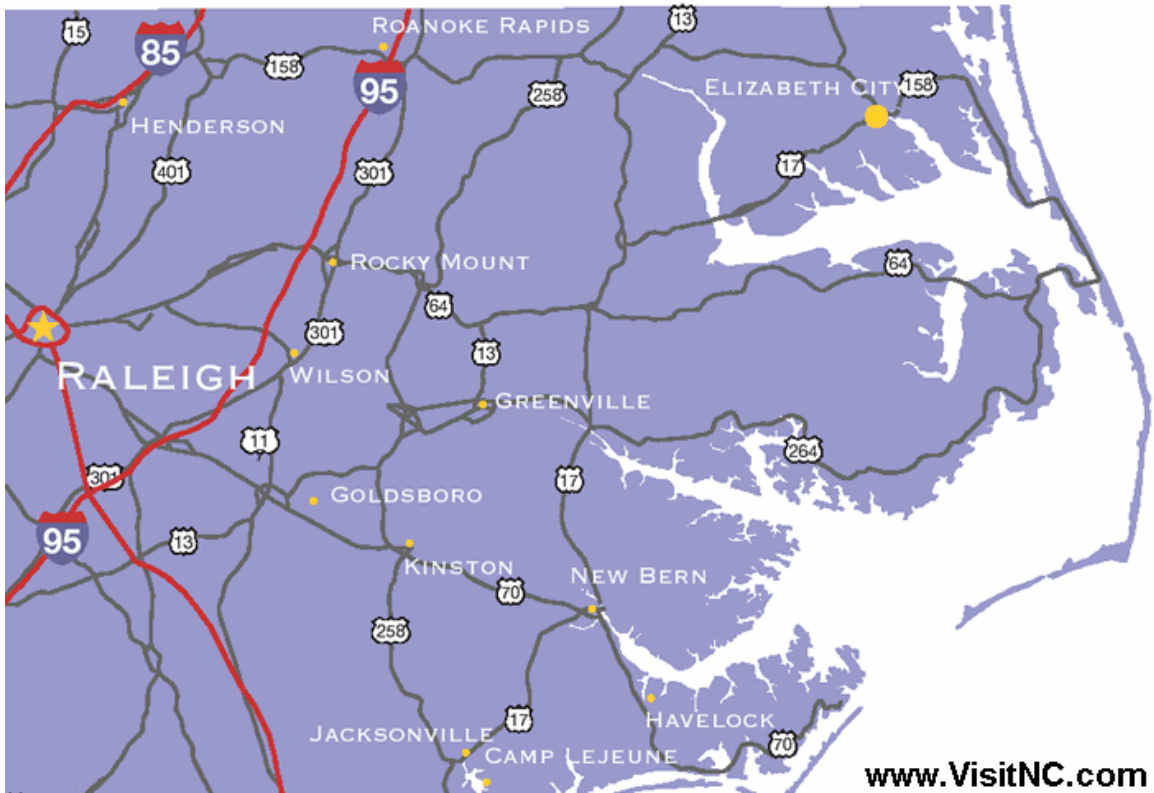
The Outer Banks at the turn of the twentieth century was a strictly homogenous group of white Anglo-Saxons that possessed a very distinct culture. The people of the Outer Banks embodied the idea of Southern Exceptionalism during this time, because they had a very strong group identity. Historian Gerald Friedman in his article “The Political Economy of Early Southern Unionism: Race, Politics, and Labor in the South, 1880-1953,” argues that southern workers held lower expectations than their northern counterparts. The result was a group of people that were less demonstrative of their suffering.<sup>19</sup> When the Wright brothers arrived at Kitty Hawk in 1900 from Dayton, Ohio, they were struck by the local economy being the polar opposite of what they were accustomed to. The economy in Ohio was very disciplined where each man was the head of the household where he specialized in some type of trade or profession. The Outer Banks was full of people that struggled to maintain subsistence. As a result, the people had to perform all types of jobs and had to rely on multi-tasking and the chance that locals needed odd jobs done around their homes.<sup>20</sup>

Today the Outer Banks is emblematic of the new South that bases its economy on tourism and real estate development. The Wright Brothers National Monument symbolizes the Outer Banks’ link to the mainland North Carolina. Without the building of the Monument, hoards of people would not venture to Kitty Hawk and Kill Devil Hills during peak season. The population on the Outer Banks skyrockets during the summer months and during holiday weekends due to its popularity as a vacation destination.<sup>21</sup>

Development and population took off at Kitty Hawk and Kill Devil Hills when the Wright Brothers Monument went up in 1932. The completion of Route 64



connecting the Outer Banks to the mainland and Routes 17 running along the entire northern Outer Banks, made visiting easier as well.



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Both of these small highways were completed in partnership with the Interstate Highway System in the 1950s. Both Route 64 and Route 17 became major access points for Interstate 95 that runs through eastern North Carolina and acts as a gateway to major cities both North and South. Figure 1 is a table that shows the changing population in the Kill Devil Hills region over the entire twentieth century. The two major points that stick out is the population decrease between 1940-1950 and the almost doubled between 1970-1980. The population decrease can likely be attributed to the local Outer Banker casualties in World War II and the military families that moved inland to military bases like Fort Bragg in Fayetteville, North Carolina. The huge population increase between

1970-1980 is more difficult to discern, as it may be a result of first round of baby boomers becoming adults and looking to invest money in vacation real estate. Northern beach communities had become expensive and overcrowded for many middle class families. Another possibility may be the fact that things like air conditioning were more readily available. Many new tourist attractions were built on the Outer Banks in the 1970s, with a few golf courses and beach clubs having been opened by investors.

**Figure 1<sup>23</sup>**

**Metropolitan Area Population At Kill Devil Hills, North Carolina, 1900-2003**

**Geographical Boundaries as of 2004  
County Based Population**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>% Change in Population</b>
1900	4,757	
1910	4,841	1.77% Increase
1920	5,115	5.66% Increase
1930	5,202	1.70% Increase
1940	6,041	16.13% Increase
1950	5,405	<b>10.53% Decrease</b>
1960	5,935	9.81% Increase
1970	6,995	17.86% Increase
1980	13,377	<b>91.24% Increase</b>
1990	22,746	70.04% Increase
2000	29,967	31.75% Increase
2003	33,116	10.51% Increase

Chapter One entitled “The Right Hand Surfmen” introduces the local Outer Bankers who worked alongside the Wright brothers during their stays in the region. A certain sense of trust and friendship developed between the Wright brothers and the local Outer Bankers. The local Outer Banks towns and villages grew up around the lifesaving stations that were set up all along the coast about seven to ten miles apart. The Wright brothers depended on these stations, because they usually possessed the only telegraphs and later telephones. In addition, the federal government funded these stations so they

always had stocked supplies. The surfmen from the lifesaving stations were master navigators on the Atlantic Ocean and surrounding Sounds, so they would be the ones who ran errands to Elizabeth City, North Carolina, and also Norfolk, Virginia when the Wright brothers needed supplies. The surfmen took care of the “small things” like building shelters, keeping up with the building maintenance, transporting visitors for the Wrights from the train station in Elizabeth City, bringing over fresh catches of bluefish, etc. When the first flight took place on December 17, 1903, the surfmen deserved a great deal of credit for helping the Wright brothers achieve their goal. Every aspect of everyday life and invention had one or more of the surfmen heavily involved and personally engaged with the Wright brothers. The Wright brothers continued to come to the Outer Banks between 1900-1903 and in 1908 and 1911, because the surfmen were very hospitable.

The second chapter will look at the Tate family who were the most important people in the lives of the Wrights while they were on the Outer Banks. The chapter is entitled “Jacks of All Trades,” because William “Bill” J. Tate and his stepbrother, Dan Tate accelerated the Wright brothers' efforts to invent heavier-than-air flight. The Tate brothers, along with Bill's wife Addie and his children, performed many different jobs to create a decent life for their families. The Currituck County Census of 1900 calls both Bill and Dan Tate “fishermen,” but this chapter explores the many jobs these men did as well.<sup>24</sup> Commercial fishing was the main source of income in the Kitty Hawk region, but Bill Tate acted as the local political boss, head of the post office, and a fisherman. The combination of the stories of Bill and Dan Tate in this chapter will give the reader a sense of how many different skills the local Outer Bankers actually had and easily satisfied the

needs and wants of the Wright brothers during their visits. The timing of work completion, however, demonstrated the work patterns of this area, much to the dismay of the Wrights from Dayton, Ohio. The Tate family was arguably the only “middle class” family in the Kitty Hawk region, because they possessed some secondary education. As a result, the Wright brothers recognized them as people that they could negotiate leases and deals with, while at the same time the Tates were the go betweens for the Wright brothers and the other locals.

“No More Lagging Behind” is the name of the third chapter that analyzes the changes that the Outer Banks went through as a legacy of the Wright brothers. The region opened to commercial development, tourism, and economic activity. The Wright brothers first arrival on the Outer Banks in 1900 did things like drive the local food prices up, but by 1932 when the Wright Brothers National Monument was built their legacy did things like bring prominent real estate investors and commercial developers to the region. The first flight caused the press media to flock to the Outer Banks, and the local Outer Bankers had to adapt to all of these new visitors that they were not accustomed to having around. The Wright brothers’ presence on the Outer Banks also opened doors for the children of the surfmen to be able to compete for jobs on North Carolina’s mainland and around the country. Without the “opening” of the Outer Banks market by the Wright brothers presence, the local Outer Bankers would have been isolated from capital flow in the national and international economy for another decade or even longer. Bill Tate was instrumental in reviving the legacy of the Wright brothers on the Outer Banks once the first flight was twenty years old in 1923. The project of building the Wright National Monument certainly served the dual purpose of honoring the Wright brothers and

opening the Outer Banks market to development. The Outer Banks we know today would be drastically different if the Wright brothers and local Outer Bankers of the early twentieth century had not enjoyed that mutual exchange of help for a legacy of economic expansion.

## **Chapter 1- “The Right Hand Surfmen”**

At 1:30 P.M. on December 14, 1903, the surfmen at the Kitty Hawk Life Saving Station saw a red flag flying over the Wright Brothers’ camp informing them that their assistance was requested in the flight experiments. Most members of the lifesaving crew were not present at the Kitty Hawk station, but were thirty miles to the north at Wash Woods, where only two weeks prior, one of the navy’s two submarines, the Moccasin, had beached after breaking a tugboat bow at the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay. By 1903, the surfmen had seen many of the Wright brothers’ flights, but a beached submarine was quite a novelty for the area. According to historian Thomas Parramore, ironically enough, “it was the Moccasin that thrust the Outer Banks into the limelight in December 1903. Before then, stray rumors of flying being done had not been widely credited.”<sup>25</sup> A large group of the Kitty Hawk and Kill Devil Hill Life Saving Station men applauded them for their efforts in saving the United States submarine, which caused the surfmen to receive national recognition on the Outer Banks before the Wright Brothers ever did.

John Daniels, Will Dough, Tom Beacham, Bob Westcott, Benny O’Neal, and two local boys drawn by the commotion were the only surfmen to respond to the red flag. The surfmen helped lay a sixty-foot monorail of spliced two-by-four planks of wood, “resting on posts one and one-half feet high,” down the northern slope. Working together, the team of surfmen carried the airplane to the top of the dune and put it on the truck, an eight-foot-long pallet with a pair of inline “double flanged” bicycle hubs and ball-bearing axles to move the plane along the track.<sup>26</sup> John Daniels ran alongside the airplane opposite Orville for the first forty feet to hold the airplane steady in balance as it

“climbed a few feet, but settled to the ground near the foot of the hill...The left wing touched first. The machine swung around and dug its skids into the sand, breaking one...Several other parts were also broken.”<sup>27</sup> Daniels knew December 14 had been a complete failure, so he and the others were disappointed to be missing the submarine action just to the north. Nonetheless, over the next three days those same lifesavers helped rebuild the airplane by gathering wood and sewing materials to expedite the process of the Wright Brothers making the first heavier-than-air flight. The wreck on December 14 had caused substantial damage to the wing structure. Finally, when Orville made the first flight at 10:25 A.M. on December 17<sup>th</sup>, those same lifesavers knew they were part of something much bigger than a beached United States submarine, as they were witnesses to the first human flight. The surfmen’s undying assistance to the Wright Brothers in terms of the manual labor of rebuilding the airplane and retrieving materials (on foot walking for miles) allowed for Wilbur and Orville to direct a very quick and efficient invention process.

The Wrights had fostered a friendship with the Outer Banks lifesavers since their first trip to North Carolina in 1900. A collection of the Wright’s photographs from 1900 show action shots of the surfmen drilling on the ocean and standing in formal poses. “In 1902, they got four men of the Kill Devil Hills crew to pose in the doorway of their station wearing white hats and jackets. The Wrights sometimes visited the stations during idle hours or took shelter there when their camp was in disrepair.”<sup>28</sup> The Wrights and the surfmen became very close in 1903 as both sides could sense that heavier-than-air flight was an actual possibility. Orville’s journal from 1903 contains numerous references to the Wright’s trips to the Kill Devil Hill station. On many occasions, one or

more of the lifesavers would venture to the Wright's camp in order to deliver packages or other types of mail.



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In all, the surfmen were a major part of the daily lives of the Wrights and their colleagues and played a major role in the running of the camp throughout the 1903 season. The surfmen were people who had the ability to perform diverse arrays of skills in order to maintain subsistence for themselves and their families. As a result, the Wright brothers found an invaluable source of labor in the surfmen. The surfmen built and rebuilt their shelters, ran errands to get supplies in Elizabeth City and Norfolk, and also escorted the Wrights visitors across the Sounds and into their camp. The individual experience that each surfmen had with the Wright brothers was unique, which is why the



letters of correspondence between the Wrights and the individual surfmen are so valuable to this thesis. The deeper meaning in these letters has to do with the fact that the Wright brothers had grown up at middle class people, and the local Outer Bankers had not come into contact with many people like them. The rural sense of time and place shocked the Wright brothers and caused the Wrights to have a greater dependence on the local Outer Bankers in order to live as comfortably as possible.

The United States Lifesaving Service opened its doors in 1847. The first stations were located along the coast of New Jersey to serve and protect the heavy ship traffic coming in and out of New York City ports. By 1854 the Lifesaving Service had expanded to Long Island and the Great Lakes, only to make its way South to the Outer Banks by 1874. Shipping was the preferred method of many companies to deliver natural resources and manufactured goods to different parts of the western hemisphere. In the late nineteenth century, Outer Banks historian David Stick asserts that shipwrecks along the eastern seaboard caused United States companies to lose millions of dollars. Congress was interested in cutting shipping losses, so they “allocated funds for the building of seven lifesaving stations on the Outer Banks.”<sup>30</sup> The original stations were built every twelve to fifteen miles along the Outer Banks from north to south at Currituck Beach, Caffey's Inlet, Kitty Hawk, Nags Head, Bodie Island, Chicamacomico, and Little Kinnakeet. The stations initially seemed to be complete failures on the Outer Banks as the lifesavers could not reach many shipwrecks in time to save the people onboard. The lifesavers could not reach many of the shipwrecks due to the miscommunication between the stations on the territory they would handle. “Partly due to two such losses occurring within a two-month span, another eleven stations were funded, the Kill Devil Hills station

among them. The plan was to have stations spaced roughly seven miles apart, which would allow quick responses anywhere along the Outer Banks.”<sup>31</sup> There was a very recognizable difference between the 1874 stations and the ones built in 1878. The 1874 stations were like barns and were exposed to the open-air environment, while the 1878 stations were lavish two-story, enclosed lookout towers with distinctive architectural trim.<sup>32</sup>

The lifesaving stations, even the newly built ones, were seen as failures right off the bat. The head station-keepers were paid two hundred dollars annually. The actual surfmen received forty dollars a month for their three or four months of resident service, in addition to a three dollar action stipend for each rescue mission they were called to during the off-season. “This was good pay for the time and place, good enough to tempt local politicians to appoint their relatives and associates to the stations with little regard for their fitness for duty.”<sup>33</sup>

A series of investigations into the North Carolina and Virginia lifesaving stations between 1875 and 1877 revealed a great deal of corruption. The result was the firing of twenty percent of the lifesaving stations’ workforce, including four keepers. The incompetence to get the job done lied in the fact that there were several teachers and blacksmiths working in the stations who had no knowledge of their rescue or on-shore duties. “The investigators found insubordination and nepotism. At one station, five of the seven employees were dismissed as incompetent.”<sup>34</sup> Following the investigations a total revamping of the hiring practices exhibited by the local governments was enacted in time to staff the new lifesaving stations in 1878 with competent surfmen. Nonetheless,

administrative problems were prevalent among the inept lifesaving station captains even after the overhaul of the old hiring system.

A major challenge for the keepers of the lifesaving stations was the staffing schedule. If a ship happened to wreck during the winter months it was completely out of luck unless the local surfmen in that area could be immediately rounded up from a great distance. The full-time staff was expanded to eight months out of each year in the 1880s and the addition of an eighth man around that time proved to be quite effective. This is an example of the expansion of the civil service that brought more capital and higher educated people to regions like the Outer Banks.

The surfmen certainly became professional public servants even though some of them were not able to read or write. According to the *Lighthouse Service Bulletin* in 1929, “in fact, the ability to read and write was sometimes the deciding factor in the selection of station keepers.”<sup>35</sup> The station keepers held the lifesavers to an extremely high standard. The district supervisors had to wear white gloves during unannounced station inspections and at some stations the men were not allowed to play cards during their downtime. “One keeper made his men sit down to meals in the same alignment in which they hauled their surfboat to the beach and manned it during rescue operations, with punishment doled out to anyone who deviated.”<sup>36</sup>

For the most part, the surfmen enjoyed two-month vacations, government pay, sturdy cottages for families, and dormitories for the rest. “From stations every seven miles or so along the coast, patrolling surfmen warned away unwary ships and aided stranded ones. To save crews, cables were often shot across ships’ bows in horrific weather, or rowboats challenged towering waves to reach them. The surfmen’s work

often was associated with unspeakable danger.”<sup>37</sup> The life of a surfman was an extremely tough life and would be considered a “blue collar” job by today’s standards. The Wright brothers’ pictures they took of the surfmen portray them as rugged, lower-class workhorses in that they work long hours and live in small government subsidized housing.



There was a strong disparity between the socioeconomic status that the surfmen had and the upper-middle class status that the Wrights were accustomed to with their father having been a Bishop. Perhaps, the Wrights’ and the local Outer Banker’s common Christian faith allowed them to put aside their class differences in order to find common ground and work together. The Wright brothers would have likely never come into contact with people this low on the socioeconomic ladder in Dayton. The surfmen had few options in order to improve their financial standing in life, and that was to become a lifesaving captain. The only economy that the local Outer Bankers knew was one where the household was at the center of all economic activity. The Wrights, on the

other hand, were “white collar” bicycle shop owners who were able to dabble in aeronautical engineering and physics, because they came from a strong financial background and had generated large incomes on their own.

The local communities on the Outer Banks grew around the lifesaving station. The lifesaving station seemed to develop into a local institution that was readily able to connect the Outer Banks to the life that North Carolina mainlanders lived. As the center of economic, social, and political life in these small Outer Banks towns and villages the stations became the city hall or town meeting house of future and past generations as the entity that defined that particular community. The lifesaving stations had their own stables, coal yard, and cookhouse, so when the Wright Brothers arrived it is no coincidence that they befriended the people who possessed all of the region’s resources. For example, the stations had the best facilities for gathering run-off rainwater off the sides of buildings and roofs, so during droughts the local people would come to the stations for any type of water. The stations were havens for the local people during heavy weather, but even on clear days the locals would gather just to watch the men practice their sea rescues and beach protocol. The children of the Outer Banks watched the lifesavers can figs and make ice cream. Perhaps, the children had never experienced the taste of ice cream or figs and yearned for a taste. The children of the Outer Banks found few luxuries as young children, unless their father held the position of lifesaving station captain.<sup>39</sup>

As the lifesaving stations evolved into institutions that defined communities, the modernization of the Outer Banks economy and political landscape began to take shape.

Activity at the lifesaving stations was similar to that at modern fire stations, with long stretches of routine drills punctuated by periods of dangerous activity under

extreme conditions. One day of the week was devoted to beach-apparatus drills and another to surfboat drills. Another day was spent in grounds keeping and building maintenance, another in resuscitation drills, and another in signal drills, during which the lifesavers were trained in communications with ships offshore.<sup>40</sup>

The Kitty Hawk community was still a self-sufficient, commercial fishing community in 1900 but the connection that developed to the outside world in the lifesaving rescues set the stage for change. Other parts of the Southern economy had evolved in the last thirty-five years since the end of the Civil War, but the Outer Banks remained trapped in the early nineteenth century.

The Wright Brothers arrival in 1900 put the Outer Banks on the map, because they not only interacted with the local surfmen, but they also depended on them to subsist on a seemingly foreign land to them. When the Wright Brothers first arrived, according to surfmen William S. Dough, the local Outer Bankers were “awful suspicious.” The locals were not used to strangers in the area so, “when the Wrights came...with boxes and machinery and whatnot there were rumors traveled down the beach.” Many of the local thought the Wright may be “spies,” while other believed they were preparing for some “evil religious conjure.” The local folk “believed in one Good God, a bad Devil, and a hot Hell, and that...God did not intend man should ever fly.” Many of the locals called for mobilization of the community men to drive the Wrights from the beach and lynch them.<sup>41</sup> Luckily for Wilbur and Orville they had developed a friendly relationship with a few of the lifesaving station men who had a major impact on the public opinion in the local communities. The surfmen carried certain legitimacy in terms of delegation with people from outside of the Outer Banks, because they were constantly interacting with outsiders during sea rescues. When the surfmen were seen beginning to embrace the presence of the Wright Brothers the locals started to come around.

For the Wrights even to get to their camp was always a daunting task in this isolated community. From the 1902 season-on, a member of the Baum family would escort the brothers across the Sound and into Baum's wharf. Jesse J. Baum, thirteen year old in 1902, recalled his father ordering to "hitch up Bold'un and I went to the pasture, caught our big, black horse, and hitched him to the cart." The Baums would struggle across the dunes carrying the Wrights supplies and glider "all the way over one hill."<sup>42</sup> The nature of the Outer Banks terrain made it impossible for the Wright Brothers to push their own cart or carry their own supplies to the camp. "In the Kill Devil Hill surfmen they had found an indispensable source of free labor and companionship, and they were adapting well to local deprivations."<sup>43</sup>

Surfman John T. Daniels was captivated by the work ethic of the Wright Brothers. The brothers woke up every morning at 7am and worked non-stop all the way until 5pm. Daniels asserted, "I never saw two men so wrapped up in their work...They had their whole heart and soul in what they were doing, and when they were working we could...stand right over them and they wouldn't pay any more attention to us than if we weren't there...After their day's work" the brothers were "the nicest fellows you ever saw." In fact, Bill Tate recalled hearing Wilbur "tell a carpenter who was helping him...that 'a nail dropped was not worth the time it took to pick it up."<sup>44</sup> This work ethic was so appealing to the Outer Bankers, because these two men were able to put all their effort and concentration into one task and one goal, human flight. The ability to specialize in one job was a complete foreign concept to the local Outer Bankers. The lifesaving jobs were the closest thing to specialized work that the locals were familiar with. The Wright brothers were only concerned about time, which suggest a very

“Northern” work ethic. The local Outer Bankers had little concept of time and when things outside of the Outer Banks actually took place.

Once the surfmen opened up to the Wright Brothers it initiated a gradual community embracement. The lifesaving job possessed the highest status in the region, so their approval of the Wrights was more than enough for the locals. The little things that the surfmen did for the Wright Brothers helped them most readily adapt to the Outer Banks. The scarcity of solid-building wood on the Outer Banks and non-stop mosquito problems were likely not in the forefront of the brothers concerns before they first came to the Outer Banks. However, the protection from mosquitoes and well-built shelters that could withstand the ever-changing weather patterns proved to be essential in the brothers being so successful in their invention. The Wrights were in a race to be the first ones to fly, so they needed to fight against the natural rhythms of the locals, and this change was the catalyst that sparked a move towards modernization. The surfmen assisted the brothers in hiring Kitty Hawk carpenter Oliver O’Neal in order to build them the best workshop-living quarters. The teamwork between the carpenter O’Neal and the surfmen allowed the Wrights to be protected from the terrible mosquito problem during the 1901 season by building with tight mesh nets in the walls. According to the *Raleigh News and Observer*, “the 1901 season was abysmal, the mosquitoes arrayed in brigades of winged piranhas to guard their beach from interlopers.”<sup>45</sup>

The Wright Brothers were fascinated by the seemingly endless number of unfamiliar species of birds and other game they found on the Outer Banks. According to Archie Daniels, son of surfman John Daniels, the brothers “watched every kind of bird in that part of the state...trying to figure which could go the longest without flapping its



wings, soar the highest, dive, bank, and turn.” The surfmen helped them settle on the turkey buzzard, by shooting down the buzzard with a .22 rifle. Wilbur and Orville would then “take over 200 measurements of that bird, from every possible angle.”<sup>46</sup> The surfmen were more than happy to assist the brothers in their “scientific hunting experiments” because most of them were outdoorsmen, for both pleasure and subsistence. The Wrights were able to take the birds and dissect them in order take notes on their bone versus muscle structures as they tried to emulate those same things when building their gliders. John Daniels saw the Wrights “imitating the birds with their arms and hands” as quite a progressive scientific action, but the wife of surfman Adam Etheridge, Lillie Etheridge, believed “they looked just like little children playing, they did.”<sup>47</sup>

The Wrights also needed assistance in repairing storm damages, building a hangar, and performing all types of other chores. The Wrights called upon Captain Jesse E. Ward at the lifesaving station “and said they would like to have the help of his men in their experiments. That captain said ‘yes’ and allowed us to run over to the Wright camp whenever we were off duty...Oh, it was lots of fun for us...I have a fortune in memories. I’m glad I helped.”<sup>48</sup>

Many of the other surfmen felt the same way in 1902. Rookie surfman John T. Daniels, a large Roanoke Islander, was of considerable assistance to the Wrights as he stood at a solid five-foot-ten and 240 pounds. Daniels and his brother-in-law, Adam Etheridge, asserted, “every day we were free...would be over there helping. Everything we did was free gratis.”<sup>49</sup> The local assistance from the surfmen had been a prerequisite for the Wright in coming to conduct their experiments on the Outer Banks, but they had no idea that the locals would be so readily available. “The surfmen sent over catches of

bluefish or spot as often as their duties allowed. They helped carry the glider up the slippery dune after each trial and ran errands for tools, food, building materials, newspapers, coal, oil, and so on.”<sup>50</sup>

Having the everyday chores taken care of by the surfmen and their families allowed for the Wrights to concentrate solely on flight. Either Daniels or Etheridge delivered the camp mail three times each week on the backs of their ponies. The other Kitty Hawk-ers gave their opinions to Wilbur and Orville on the upcoming week’s weather pattern and how the brothers should repair their shelters in order to remain “weather-sealed.” “Lillie Etheridge repaired some of the frequent tears in wing cloth on her sewing machine, and Bill Tate oversaw the hauling of lumber, recruited men to build the hangar, and ferried the brothers to Elizabeth City as the need arose.”<sup>51</sup> Once all of the loose ends were regularly taken care of by the local people the everyday flying seemed to constantly bring new adventures. Surfman Daniels loved to tell people about a flight when he was “tangled in a rope and hung on for all he was worth...’I was afraid my time had come,” but luckily he was able to escape the crash without any injuries. Later during the 1902 season, the Wrights glider spooked Etheridge’s horse, which then “pulled the stake up and ran away.” Etheridge was forced to walk about five miles back to the lifesaving station with his horse now roaming wild on the Outer Banks.

By late October in 1902 the Wrights were ready to pack up and head back to Dayton for the winter. The Wrights told the surfmen that they would appreciate them taking care of the camp sporadically. The Wrights packed their glider away in its hangar and “got Dan Tate and James Hobbs to cart their baggage to Kitty Hawk, and left.”<sup>52</sup> The 1902 season had been a huge success as it convinced, not only the Wright Brothers, but

also the surfmen that flight was inevitable. When the Wright brothers went back to Dayton they took with them their most important personal and professional items, but usually left their tools for the next season.

Wilbur and Orville arrived at Kitty Hawk in September of 1903 on a tugboat named *Guide* as they had with them a 625-pound glider, propellers, and a gasoline motor that they had built back in Dayton. According to historian Thomas Parramore, “succeed or fail, the beachmen expected the 1903 season to be an epoch in their lives,” when they saw what the brothers had brought with them.<sup>53</sup> The infamous day of the first flight was December 17, 1903, but as much credit as the Wrights received for the invention of the first airplane, the surfmen’s efforts and assistance were just as important. Historian Thomas Parramore asserts that it was only the Wrights that seemed to be aware that a transcendent moment in history was about to take place, but he neglects to give the surfmen enough credit. Surfmen like John T. Daniels had the presence of mind and foresight to always be present at the Camp when the Wrights were performing their most unbelievable experiments. Some may call this luck, but the truth of the matter is that a man like Daniels was able to snap one of the most famous photographs in the history of the world when he snapped the first takeoff because he knew the Wrights had a lot of substance in their work. Daniels easily could have been assisting the other Kitty Hawk and Kill Devil Hill surfmen up in Corolla as they saved the United States Submarine the *Moccasin* in order to collect a hazard pay bonus, but he chose to stay in Kitty Hawk and pull manual labor shifts in his downtime at the Wright’s Camp.

Daniels recalled that on December 17<sup>th</sup> the Wrights “got their machine out...and we helped them roll it out to the foot of big hill.”<sup>54</sup> Once Daniels had built a fire in the

outdoor stove the Wrights kept nearby the site, the men who were present huddled around it to warm their hands against the cold Outer Banks winter breeze. Daniels then had to chase a few razorback pigs off so that they would not interfere with the takeoff and flight path. Daniels and William Dough asserted, “the brothers walked off from us and stood close together...talking low to each other for some time. After a while they shook hands, and we couldn’t help noticing how they held to each other’s hands like they hated to let up, like two folks parting who were they’d ever see each other again.”<sup>55</sup> The behavior of the Wrights in this situation shows that they came from an upper-middle class family, because the decision was made in a very chivalrous and democratic manner. The class disparity is evident in this situation between the Wrights and the surfmen, because both Daniels and Dough seem confused by their pre-flight mannerisms. These surfmen must be recounting the distinct memory of the handshake, because it seemed unusual to them at the time. Perhaps, the local Outer Bankers had a completely different code of behavior when it came to displaying your masculinity or manhood. Nonetheless, Wilbur immediately selected Daniels to snap the photograph of the first airplane taking off, because he was an excellent marksman. Even though he had never taken a photograph before, Wilbur told him it was similar to “sighting a rifle.” “Look in the window...and when it rises...just squeeze this thing here.”<sup>56</sup>

The first flight seemed like a complete failure to those who were present, because they were used to the magnificent glider flights that the Wrights had been performing at Kitty Hawk for the past three seasons. In the glider flights the Wrights had been riding the wind, but now they were managing to fly while moving straight into the wind. The mob of witnesses offered contradictory testimony of the first flight. Daniels was the lone

person present with enough means to express himself in a descriptive way with any kind of emotion.

I don't think I ever saw a prettier sight in my life. Its wings were braced with new and shining copper piano wires. The sun was shining bright that morning and the wires just blazed in the sunlight like gold. The machine looked like some big, graceful golden bird sailing of into the wind,...it made us feel kind o' meek and prayerful like.<sup>57</sup>

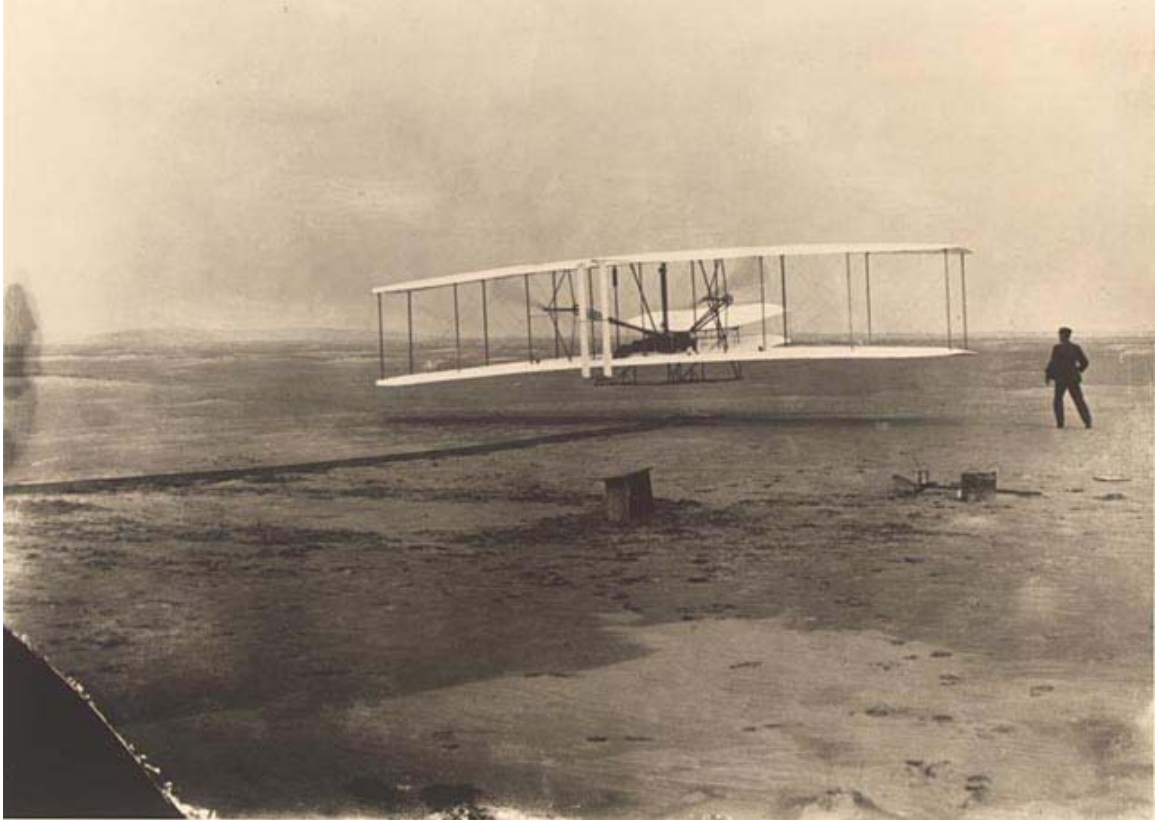
The previous quote from John Daniels suggests that the surfmen practiced some kind of informal, individual religious experience as compared to the more formal worship of the Wright as the sons of a Bishop. Religion aside, the brothers were inspired to fly the rest of the day and even when all of the surfmen and on-lookers went their separate ways, Daniels stayed to assist Wilbur and Orville. Daniels recalled story from late in the day where the Wright were "tinkering with a fitting" and contemplating whether to go up for a fifth flight when a huge gust of wind swept across Kill Devil Hill. The thirty-five mile per hour wind "swept across the beach just you've seen an umbrella turned inside out." Wilbur was extremely agile and was able to maneuver off the airplane, however Orville and Daniels stayed with the plane until Orville, who was "as fast as lightning and quick as a cat climbed right through...and came out the side." The much larger and slower Daniels was not able to make it.<sup>58</sup>

I got tangled up in the wires that held the thing together. I found myself caught in them wires, the machine blowing across the beach, heading for the ocean...rolling over and over and me getting more tangled up in it all the time...When the thing did stop...I nearly broke up every wire and upright getting out.<sup>59</sup>

Daniels, for the rest of his life, took pride in being the very first airplane casualty.

The Wrights had no idea how perfect the picture of the first flight was until they returned home to Dayton and were able to develop the film. The picture was the only tangible evidence the Wright brothers possessed in order to legitimize their claim of

having achieved the first flight.<sup>60</sup> In the photo, the airplane is hovering upwards of four feet above the end of the track, having just taken off from the truck. Orville is lying on his stomach, face-up in a Superman position, while Wilbur is flailing his arms as he stares intently to the right of the plane. “Beyond lies a boundless, featureless sand and skyscape summoning Orville towards a limitless, unfathomable future.”<sup>61</sup>



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Nevertheless, the photo revealed too much in terms of the design of the Wright's airplane. Wilbur and Orville did not allow the photograph to be published in order to ensure the fact that other inventors racing to develop the first airplane would not compromise their original invention. It took Orville until 1930, a total of twenty-seven years, to send Daniels a copy so that he could forever look upon his excellent

marksmanship.<sup>63</sup> The fact that Orville remembered to send Daniels the photograph at all suggests that there was a strong link between both men.

The *Norfolk Virginian-Pilot* was the first newspaper to carry the story that the Wright brothers had completed the first powered flight. The Norfolk newspaper was informed of the first flight within two hours of it happening, so it was able to carry a full story the next morning on December 18<sup>th</sup>. “The Pilot’s account, largely fabricated and wildly inaccurate, was still a classic sloop in journalistic annals, by the same paper that, eight months before, has scorned the *Charlotte Observer* for believing that ‘We will yet fly.’”<sup>64</sup> Exactly how the *Pilot* received the story so quickly after the first flight is a highly debated topic. The newspaper interviews suggest that surfmen Adam Etheridge and John T. Daniels, after the second flight, quickly rode over to the lifesaving station and wired Harry P. Moore who was a *Pilot* reporter whom the Wrights promised to send word of any powered flights. The message was wired to Norfolk telegrapher C.C. Grant who was able to pass the message along to Moore. Kitty Hawk weatherman Joe Doshier sent a direct message to the Wright family in Dayton so that they would be the second party to find out about the triumphant flights.

The Kill Devil Hill Lifesaving Station for the next two weeks sent out inflated accounts of the first flights as each surfmen had another version of the story.<sup>65</sup> Orville Wright met with a group of the surfmen at Kitty Hawk in 1928 and confirmed with them that “when you called the coast guard station...about our flight, the station man turned to me and asked whether they should tell you...I told them to tell you nothing, but in their enthusiasm they did give out the story and made it a bit stronger than it was. I believe they told you we flew three miles.”<sup>66</sup>

It is also possible that the surfmen embellished the story to the press in order to protect the Wright's secrets of flight. The Wright brothers had constantly drilled into the surfmen that their lead in aviation technology would be short-lived if their engineering secrets got out to the general public. The surfmen were so close to the Wrights and had developed so much respect for them by this point that they would make up these exaggerated stories in order to worry the other aviation inventors. The worrisome feeling in the other inventors stemmed from the fact that the embellished stories would make it seem as though the Wrights were still much farther ahead in invention than they actually were. The small subtleties like embellished stories from the surfmen would allow the Wright brothers to remain on top of the aviation world until Wilbur's death in 1912.

After the 1903 season, the Wright brothers were no longer dependent on wind, hills, and treeless, sandy terrain in order to fly due to the sources of sustained power that were now in their possession. They were now able to conduct their flights at an airfield near Dayton, so that they could perform their experiments in close proximity with their main laboratory. By November of 1906 Adam Etheridge was writing letters to the Wright brothers asking them for the rights to use their Kill Devil Hill buildings and he offered to send any materials inside of them back to Dayton. "The buildings, he observed, were sanded up and soon would be useless, but they had good wood. He wished to do some fishing in the spring and use the lumber for a camp of his own. The Wrights informed both men that they would retain the structures for possible further use."<sup>67</sup> When the Wright brothers finally returned in April of 1908 the Kill Devil camp looked like it had been ransacked by a small army. The hangar from the second season



was roofless and covered in a couple feet of sand. The newer living quarters was blown over in a recent violent storm and the remains of the 1902 glider were buried in the sand. “Moreover, the site had been pretty thoroughly looted by a group of boys from Edenton, among others.”<sup>68</sup> Perhaps the boys stole the materials because the area had become famous, but it is likely that they needed the basic materials in order to help their families out.

The surfmen had no idea when the Wrights would arrive for the 1908 season since they were busy traveling all over the world doing demo flights in their updated airplane. The Wright brothers were on a tight schedule during the 1908 season as the American, British, and French Governments were all interested in buying a prototype of their updated airplane for their militaries. Upon arrival at Kitty Hawk, Wilbur was very anxious to get his lumber from Elizabeth City. On April 11, 1908, Wilbur was said to have walked five miles to Kitty Hawk in order to discuss surfmen Captain Midgett’s willingness to go to Elizabeth City in order to pickup his lumber early. “Midgett protested that it was Easter weekend and he could not deliver before Tuesday, but Wilbur clarified the situation by offering him twenty dollars, instead of the regular fee of six dollars to get the lumber to him by Monday morning.”<sup>69</sup> Captain Midgett asserted the following day that “the \$20 offer spoke to us...We were to have a special service at our church the next day and got under way as soon as possible. We had a good run...and arrived in Elizabeth City that (Saturday) afternoon. We left town the next morning at 3 o’clock and made it home in time for Easter service. We delivered the lumber Monday A.M....and we all felt good.”<sup>70</sup> The local surfman carpenter Oliver O’Neal readily

agreed to build the new hangar-living quarters. The process was slow due to the hardship in transporting the lumber from Kitty Hawk to Baum's Wharf over the difficult terrain.

Having been friends for the past eight years, Wilbur slept and ate with the surfmen at the station until the camp was fit to be occupied. Orville was finally able to make it to Kitty Hawk, with the plane, on April 25.<sup>71</sup> The surfmen were eager to emulate the Wrights' mannerisms and behavior, because they believed the brothers represented high-class society. The local Outer Bankers were proud to be such close friends and acquaintances with two of the most famous people in the world at the time, so the surfmen did anything in their own power to somehow have their name associated with the Wright brothers. Even though the surfmen seemed to be in awe of the Wrights' international stardom there was still a sense of mutual respect, as the Wrights never became "big headed" or full of themselves due to their level of success. The humbleness exhibited by the Wright brothers asserts that their religious upbringing had a profound effect on their character. The simple nature of the brothers as religious people intrigued the local Outer Bankers and surfmen who were also very traditional in their values and everyday lives.

In September 1908 when the Brothers were back in Dayton, they heard from surfmen Adam Etheridge who was again asking them for exclusive access to their camp buildings. Etheridge had found that the living quarters and hangar had been broken into and "the box with the machine in it is busted." Wilbur and Orville turned down Etheridge once again in his efforts to take over the camp, but hired him for five dollars a year to keep both buildings "in as good order as possible." Etheridge took this job very seriously as he fixed the leaky roof, "closed the house, placed a post in front of the door,

and nailed the windows shut.”<sup>72</sup> Within the next two months the camp was in pristine condition as he was intrigued by the fact that his efforts could lead to the Wrights flying at Kitty Hawk once again. Etheridge was clearly embracing the historic value of having world-renowned celebrities continually coming to visit the Outer Banks. Etheridge asserted that “I always look in the paper for your work & am glad to see what you are doing,” to which Wilbur replied that they would return in the summer of 1911.<sup>73</sup>

In mid-August 1911, just before Orville left Dayton for the Outer Banks, Etheridge sent the brothers a disconcerting message. The message informed the brothers that surfman Bob Wescott was tearing down the 1905 Wright living quarters-hangar. Only a few hours after receiving the message Orville wired back saying “if Mr. Wescott has torn down any part of the shed please request him to replace it at once.” Etheridge spoke with Wescott who rebutted saying that “he was going to continue taking it down.” Wescott had used most of the solid wood in order to build himself a brand new dwelling house next to the lifesaving station. The Wright living quarters-hangar building supposedly “was on his land and he had a perfect right to it after it had been vacated.”<sup>74</sup>

Etheridge was in a very difficult “middle-man” position, because he was a completely devoted friend and companion of the Wrights, but Wescott was his boss at the lifesaving station and the source of a majority of his income. Recently, Orville had given the wreck of the 1908 shed to Etheridge and John Daniels at last, as they “used the lumber in barns they were building on their Roanoke Island farms.”<sup>75</sup> Etheridge could not stress the fact enough to Orville that he could not “get crossed up much where we are at, here together,” since he was a member of Wescott’s lifesaving crew. However, “any thing I can do for you let me know-I will surely do it.” Orville did not learn until he

arrived at Kitty Hawk that Wescott had certainly leased the Kill Devil Hill tract of land from Captain Hayman's family (probably in order to acquire the building and for no other reason).<sup>76</sup> The fact that Wescott may have leased the tract of land from the Hayman family for the sole purpose of knocking down the Wright brothers hangar-living quarters suggests that the people on the Outer Banks by 1911 had developed a sense of private property. With Wescott acting as lifesaving captain in 1911, he was likely one of the most educated and experienced men in the region in terms of administration and negotiation. Etheridge could not outspokenly go against Wescott's decisions because he would have lost his job, but it says a lot about his dedication as a surfman to the Wright brothers. The fact that he would do anything, except lose his job suggests that the Wrights were highly important to the locals even at the end of their time on the Outer Banks.

The surfmen from the Kitty Hawk and Kill Devil Hills lifesaving stations were essential in the Wright brothers conducting the first heavier-than-air flight in such a short amount of time. The surfmen, with their diverse arrays of skills and experience in odd jobs, were able to take care of much of the tedious day-to-day chores for the Wrights so that they were able to solely concentrate on the invention process and have a little time for leisurely activities. The middle class status of the Wright brothers seemed to be an anomaly to the surfmen at first due to the "blue collar" nature of being a surfman. However, the work ethic of the Wright brothers proved to the surfmen that the rural sense of time and place was not conducive to any kind of economic progress. The surfmen embraced the changes that the Wrights brought the local community, and by chain reaction the other local Outer Bankers soon followed. The other locals followed in suit

with the surfmen, because the lifesavers acted as ambassadors to the Wrights due to the fact that the surfmen's jobs carried the most prestige in the region. The individual surfmen who assisted the Wrights the most frequently in John Daniels, Adam Etheridge, and William Dough understood the historic value of constantly being available to assist Wilbur and Orville whenever they needed. The understanding they had allowed them to be major factors in the mutual exchange where the Wright brothers de-isolated the Outer Banks and the surfmen assisted the Wrights in inventing the airplane quickly.

## **Chapter 2-“Jacks of All Trades”-William J. Tate & Dan Tate**

As Joseph J. Doshier stepped out of the Kitty Hawk Weather Bureau Office the steady, hot wind ripped through his loose fitting shirt and nearly blew the letter right out of his hand. The early August mornings were quite lonely for the sole employee of the Kitty Hawk Weather Station, but he was on a mission to finish his daily wind, precipitation, and temperature measurements in order to get in a late-afternoon bird-hunt. The letter in his hand had arrived just two days earlier on August 10<sup>th</sup> from a man named Wilbur Wright residing in Dayton, Ohio, who was inquiring about Kitty Hawk’s average sustained wind velocities during the autumn months. While drudging across the wet, morning sand Doshier stopped off at William Tate’s house to attempt to find more information on this letter that had arrived from Ohio. Bill Tate was “a local postmaster, notary, and Currituck County Commissioner” which meant that any telegram, legal document, or piece of legislation that arrived on the Outer Banks had to be passed or verified by him.<sup>77</sup> Upon reading the telegram Tate was excited that outsiders, people from the North were interested in finding more information on Kitty Hawk and its weather. Before Doshier was able to take the letter back, Tate scribbled down Wilbur’s address. Tate knew that the inquirer was interested in some kind of weather experiments in the high winds of the Outer Banks.

When Doshier left, Bill Tate immediately took out a piece of paper and a pen and began to write to this man Wilbur Wright from Ohio:

In answering, I would say that you find here nearly any type of ground you could wish; you could, for instance, get a stretch of sandy land one mile by five with a

bare hill in the center 80 feet high, not a tree or bush anywhere to break the evenness of the wind current. This in my opinion would be a fine place; our winds are always steady, generally from 10 to 20 miles velocity per hour.<sup>78</sup>

Tate's heart was racing with excitement as he continued to describe the vast, desolate land that he called his home. Kitty Hawk rarely hosted special guests, so how was he to convince this man from Ohio to venture to what seemed like the end of the Earth for many? We know Kitty Hawk rarely hosted special guests because there was such a strong disconnect in the everyday culture between the mainland and the Outer Banks of North Carolina. The letter showed Bill's love for his local community, the passion he exhibited in conducting his professions everyday, and a yearning to grasp the outside world that seemed to have eluded the Outer Bankers for two centuries. Tate tried to convey to Wilbur that his personal skill set (which was extremely diverse) along with the human capital of the local community would ensure a successful and efficient environment for experimentation. He closed the letter by offering up an invitation to Kitty Hawk that was irresistible: "If you decide to try your machine here & come, I will take pleasure in doing all I can for your convenience & success & pleasure, & I assure you you will find a 'hospitable people' when you come among us."<sup>79</sup>

In 1900, William J. Tate was an up-and-coming workhorse who acted as the local postmaster and assistant weatherman for the area. Orville Wright would later describe Bill as "postmaster, farmer, fisherman, and political boss of Kitty Hawk" asserting that he was a typical Outer Banker during this time- versatile, independent, self-sufficient, and rough on the edges.<sup>80</sup> Tate's house in Kitty Hawk was a "tough" man's house consisting of two stories, five rooms, solid wood frame, and void of any kind of paint due to the constant sandblasting from the natural terrain. These main character traits of Bill Tate

made him the ideal host and aid for the Wright Brother's visits to the Outer Banks from 1900 to 1903. Bill's wife, Addie, assisted him in his daily endeavors as postmaster and assistant weatherman. Together the two of them formed a workhorse team that was able to rally the sixty-six Kitty Hawk families behind the Wright Brothers in order to maximize their potential in everyday survival and facilitate the invention processes.



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Tate provided Wilbur and Orville with room and board at his Kitty Hawk residence for the first few weeks after their arrival. They needed it to make a smooth adjustment to the weather, the food, and the drinking water of the Outer Banks. The Wright Brothers agreed to pay four dollars a week to Bill and Addie for room, board, and Bill's assistance in choosing a proper beach location for their camp (living quarters,



mechanical hangar, and food supply shelter). The local Outer Banks residents quickly became aware of the Wright Brothers' presence in Kitty Hawk and flocked to their camp-site in order to view their initial experiments. The locals "looked on in awe and amusement in the following days as Wilbur Wright engrossed himself in woman's work. Pitching a canvas lean-to in the front yard, he unfolded bolts of cloth on the...porch, cut them into suitable lengths, and asked to use the family sewing machine."<sup>82</sup> The fact that Bill Tate joined in on the sewing of canvas with Wilbur, a traditionally gendered role on the Outer Banks for women, suggested that Tate was the first convert of the Wright Brothers to the idea that human flight was possible.

The Tate family had been living on the Outer Banks for generations when the Wright Brothers arrived at Kitty Hawk. William Tate grew up on the sand dunes near Kitty Hawk and walked past Kill Devil Hill everyday on his walk to school. The history of the individual Tate family is relatively unknown, but we do know that Bill came into the public Outer Banks scene when he established the first post office in Kitty Hawk in 1878. The general history of the Kitty Hawk community as a people is one of commercial fishing and shipwrecks as a business. The Tate family was likely a synthesis of native Outer Banks "beach people" and the survivors of New England or Caribbean merchant shipwrecks off the coast of Kitty Hawk. It is difficult to think about shipwrecks in terms of forms of employment and income, but the fact that hundreds of coastal men held positions as life-saving attendants, lighthouse tenders, and ship crewmen suggests that "there was ample opportunity for a man with business sense to make a good profit buying and selling salvaged material, and frequent jobs were available removing cargo of vessels lost on the beach."<sup>83</sup> According to Outer Banks historian David Stick in

*Graveyard of the Atlantic*, in the six years from August 1893, to August 1899 an average of almost one ship per week was stranded on the North Carolina coast. “The majority were gotten off, yet there were enough totally lost to leave nine full shiploads of lumber and eight of the mineral phosphate on the coast, as well as five shiploads of coal, two of shingles, and one each of iron ore, coffee, sugar, salt, grain, lime, molasses, cotton, marble, and crushed stone, not to mention a number that carried general cargoes or were in ballast.”<sup>84</sup>

The small, self-sufficient communities like Kitty Hawk started to spring up on the Outer Banks in the winters of 1874-1875 when the Federal Government commissioned life saving stations along the North Carolina coast. Since the end of the Civil War, trade and commerce along the United States’ eastern seaboard had dramatically increased, so the Mid-Atlantic waters were constantly bombarded with merchant ships sailing from Boston, Fall River, Portsmouth, etc. to Charleston, Cuba, and other places in the Caribbean. The most common place for shipwrecks was off the coast of North Carolina, so families like the Tates that lived year round on the Outer Banks were essential in maintaining a steady system of domestic and international trade for the United States. Bill Tate’s wife, Addie, had a brother named Dr. John L. Cogswell who provided the community medical care, but was known around the community as the “Connecticut Yankee.”<sup>85</sup> Perhaps Bill Tate was the descendant of families who had lived off of the shipwreck business and Addie was the direct descendant of a merchant who had been shipwrecked on their way to or from New England, and had decided to make their permanent residence in Kitty Hawk. Addie living a very modest life with very few luxuries as opposed to her brother who is a wealthy doctor from Connecticut is a fairly

strong case that they had been separated for a long period of time due to some unexpected happening within their family like a shipwreck. The Tates had an interesting family dynamic because Bill and Addie were a synthesis of native Outer Banks beach people and ‘Yankees’ from Connecticut. The fact that Bill Tate, the local political boss, married an outsider and was able to have accepted by the other locals suggests the political and social power he possessed in the region. The local beach people were reluctant to accept the Wright Brothers upon their arrival, so there are a few examples of how Bill Tate was crucial in many people’s experiences on the Outer Banks.

Bill Tate dedicated every facet of his life to assisting the Wright Brothers in their first three visits to Kitty Hawk from 1900 to 1903. Tate assisted Wilbur and Orville in any way possible and even put his postmaster career aside (Addie became postmistress) in order to be present for the Wright’s glider experiments. Tate would scurry through his monotonous chores each day only to venture over to Lookout Hill and help with the Brothers’ primitive flights. According to Addie Tate, he “worked so hard that...it endangered his health, and some of the...family went to the Wrights and said it would be a good thing when the experiments were finished because...Bill couldn’t stay away from the camp and he was doing two men’s jobs.”<sup>86</sup> When the local Kitty Hawk residents noticed that Tate was quite removed from his daily routines, flocks of these tanned, weather-hardened people would come down to the Camp just to watch Tate’s enthusiasm for assistance. When the Wright Brothers determined that Lookout Hill did not provide enough speed and lift, they decided to move their everyday operation down to Kill Devil Hill. A few days later Bill Tate strapped up his old horse named “Don Quixote” and carted the glider and tent three miles down to the 105-foot Kill Devil Hill. Upon arrival

Tate setup the tent for their new Camp-site, but initially a lot of time was lost because Wilbur and Orville were extremely dehydrated and Bill was forced to carry boiled water four miles to them everyday.<sup>87</sup>

Bill Tate's most daunting services were the trips to Elizabeth City in order to purchase food, building supplies, and fuel for their gas stove. The round-trip from Kitty Hawk to Elizabeth City in those days (1900-1903) could take as long as forty-eight hours depending on the weather and how the conditions of the Albemarle Sound were on that particular day. One day that stood out in Tate's own recollection thirty year later was when he made the trip for "a three burner stove, dishes, and gasoline." Tate had never seen the fuel for the stove before and asserted that "I never will forget that I wrapped it in a tarpaulin & put it away up forward in the boat so it would be as far from me...as possible...but I took the wrong precaution. I should have left it open."<sup>88</sup> He should have not wrapped the fuel in the tarp, because the fuel spilled all over the tarp and later caught on fire at an unspecified and inconvenient time inside his house. The quote from Bill Tate shows both how isolated the people of Kitty Hawk were in terms of what was universally available in 1900, but also how dedicated and essential he was to the Wright Brothers inventing flight in such a short amount of time. Bill Tate had never seen fuel in the form of gasoline so it is clear that he may never have come into contact with a gas stove up to that point in his life. At the same time, his handling of such a foreign substance during a difficult boat trip back to Kitty Hawk solely for the small conveniences of the Wright Brothers' eating and drinking habits (boil water to avoid contracting typhoid) demonstrates he was instrumental in the everyday survival of the Wright Brothers.

Bill Tate assisted the Wright Brothers for personal gain, and not just the thrill of working alongside people he felt would become famous. By late October 1900 when the Wright Brothers were heading back to Dayton for the winter, Tate was able to obtain the scrap pieces of wood and canvas from their first glider. Tate was able to use the extra wood to make repairs to his home and keep the Wright Brothers' Camp in-shape while the canvas was used by Addie to make clothes for the Tate children. Tate took advantage of the chance to buy Wilbur and Orville's gasoline stove, "a marvel to the Outer Bankers, for three dollars, though he seems never to have marshaled the will to use it. The Wright also bequeathed him the wrecked glider, asking only that he forbid photographs and not discuss it with strangers."<sup>89</sup> The Wrights did not want their aviation secret to be leaked out to the press media or people like Samuel Langley up in Washington, D.C. who they were competing for the first flight with. Tate was intrigued by the Wright Brothers and thought there was much he could learn from them in terms of being successful outside of the Outer Banks. Tate was one of the few Outer Bankers that had a sense of how different mainland North Carolina was from the Outer Banks. It seems as though Tate wanted to emulate the Wrights' professionalism, punctuality, and work ethic, as he believed them to be the embodiment of success. Tate was struck by their frugality, though "they lived well, I knew because I...lunched with them at the tent often" suggesting that the Brothers trusted and needed Tate more than anyone else in the area even though he was somewhat involved for personal gain.<sup>90</sup>

Bill Tate was compatible being with the Wright Brothers, because they were people from outside of Kitty Hawk that had no "superior airs." As he put it, Wilbur and Orville were "the soul of courtesy...The rule of 'after you my dear Alphonse was held as

rigid as iron by both...Approach a gate or door and there was no chance that you could arrive first...Courtesy and deference to all alike” was their life’s covenant.<sup>91</sup> The Wrights had grown up the sons of Bishop Milton Wright in an urban middle-class neighborhood in Dayton. The virtues of discipline, integrity, and courtesy had been instilled in them from a very early age to encompass and accommodate all situations and all types of people. All these reasons caused Tate to work tirelessly to get Wilbur and Orville to return for more experiments the following season. Tate kept a constant correspondence at the end of 1900 and beginning of 1901 where he concentrated his writings on an “Indian summer,” “plenty of nice ocean fish, and little to no mosquitoes due to the dry weather.”<sup>92</sup> The main point Tate had was that the Wright Brothers could expect better conditions at Kitty Hawk the next time they came. Tate continued his staunch support of the Wright Brothers return to Kitty Hawk by addressing Wilbur in the letters as “Dear Mr. Wright,” and also adding to the letters full pages of advice on how to build more effective hangars, living quarters, and where to find the best building materials. Tate went as far as to send Wilbur and Orville Elizabeth City lumber prices, when he correctly asserted they needed “simply a rough house rain proof with floor...& the cracks covered with strips, to keep out sand.”<sup>93</sup> Tate offered to order the building materials for them and have them ready for building when/if they arrived back at Kitty Hawk in the fall.

During the summer of 1901, Bill Tate was only concentrated on getting the Wright Brothers back to Kitty Hawk for their continued experiments. Tate bought “building materil & roofing felt” from a Kramer’s mill in Elizabeth City and had each piece of lumber “squared and cut” as the Brothers needed. While in Elizabeth City Tate

also struck deals with a local grocer, gasoline company, and building supply companies “who treat you fair.”<sup>94</sup> The Wright brothers considered changing the location of their experiments to a spot in northwest Indiana on Lake Michigan or near Sea Island, Georgia, but ended up returning to the Outer Banks due to Bill Tate’s dedication to their cause. Bill Tate catered to every need of the Wright Brothers the entire summer of 1901, because he knew the positive repercussions that their presence in Kitty Hawk brought to the community. Even though the community was skeptical of Wilbur and Orville during their first visit to the Outer Banks, the “beach people” started to open up to them when they saw how invested Tate was physically, mentally, and professionally in the work of other people. Tate was so effective at negotiating local deals for the Wright Brothers, because he prided himself on being local and knowing how to manage relationships between the “beach people.” The Outer Banks people were devoutly religious as most poor, rural people were at this time, but only Tate could connect with them due to the fact that they trusted him as an ambassador to the outside world.

The “beach people” started to open up to the Wright brothers when Bill Tate began spending more time working at their camp than at the lifesaving station. Tate was one of the few established middle-class citizens in Kitty Hawk due to the fact that he had attended some secondary schooling in Elizabeth City, North Carolina. The education he obtained in Elizabeth City allowed him to interact with people from mainland North Carolina and also from the Chesapeake Bay region of Virginia. Tate was one of the few Outer Bankers who possessed the ability to carry out administrative work such as scheduling, event planning, legislation, litigation, and bookkeeping. Bill Tate was able to grasp the concept of urban work habits versus the work habits of his rural counterparts.

The Outer Banks had been trapped in a task-oriented economy since the first people lived at the lost colony at Roanoke Island, but Tate adopted the time-oriented system of work when he assisted the Wrights in every aspect of their invention. Perhaps, the common Kitty Hawker began to open up to the Wrights through Tate abandoning traditional work values in order to participate in work that he knew would be successful. The Wrights embodied hard work, dedication, and teamwork, as those are all characteristics that seem to rub-off when the product is deemed to be a success.

The most difficult negotiations during the summer of 1901 for Bill Tate were dealing with Captain Daniel Webster Hayman who laid claim to the Kill Devil Hill land. Tate thought it necessary to ask permission from Captain Hayman in order to begin building the Wright Brothers a new shelter on that property. Tate assured Wilbur and Orville that his persuasive abilities would cause Hayman to only ask for a “mere pittance” in order for them to build on his land. Sure enough Captain Hayman assured Tate that a building might be erected, as long as the Wrights tore it down when they were through with their seasonal experiments.<sup>95</sup> The Hayman family had laid claim to the Kill Devil Hill property sometime in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century as they asserted their membership in the Masons, Scottish Rite, and the Shrine groups. Captain Hayman was born at Kitty Hawk and was one of the first Captains at the Kitty Hawk Life Saving Station before he invested in a joint venture in the shipping industry. Hayman owned shares in the John E. McAllister Company, which was a merchant firm established out of New York City. As a master mariner he was “better known to northeastern North Carolina, Norfolk and the Atlantic seaports from Boston to the Gulf of Mexico as ‘Captain Dan’”, and carried a



nobility-like pride with him at all times having been a descendant of the Hayman Clan from Scotland.<sup>96</sup>

Captain Hayman's home was situated on the sound side of Kill Devil Hill about half a mile west of the hill. According to Hayman's brother, Reverend Louis D. Hayman, the author of the family genealogy, "the 'old traditional' family graveyard was right under the sand dune on which the Wright Memorial...now stands."<sup>97</sup> Hayman adds that Captain Hayman was a master of a sailing vessel when the Civil War began. At one point during the Civil War he was captured by a Federal ship, volunteered to be the ship's navigator, but quickly managed to run it ashore and escape. A strain of potato that that he introduced from Barbados, considered superior to any local variety, is still grown on the Outer Banks. "The captain was also a Methodist 'exhorter,' or Bible reader and 'tooth puller' for his neighborhood when he met the Wrights."<sup>98</sup> The Kitty Hawk community was a place where people performed many different jobs and tasks in order to maintain subsistence. The lack of capital flow in the region and a lack of natural resources that people would be able to manufacture into usable products caused people to have to earn their livings in many different ways. At Kitty Hawk, it was commonplace for a man to be the head of the household while being listed as a fisherman on the federal census, but also selling wild game that he had hunted down, working at the lifesaving station as a surfmen, and also assisting other local people with odd-jobs like painting or building repairs. Hayman, in particular, seems to have been a very manipulative landlord who relied on an imagined class hierarchy in the United States to lay claims to large parcels of land while pulling Kitty Hawker's rotted teeth. Hayman tried to establish

himself as a North Carolina “nobleman” in an area that was too poor and disconnected from modern society on mainland North Carolina to fight back against him.

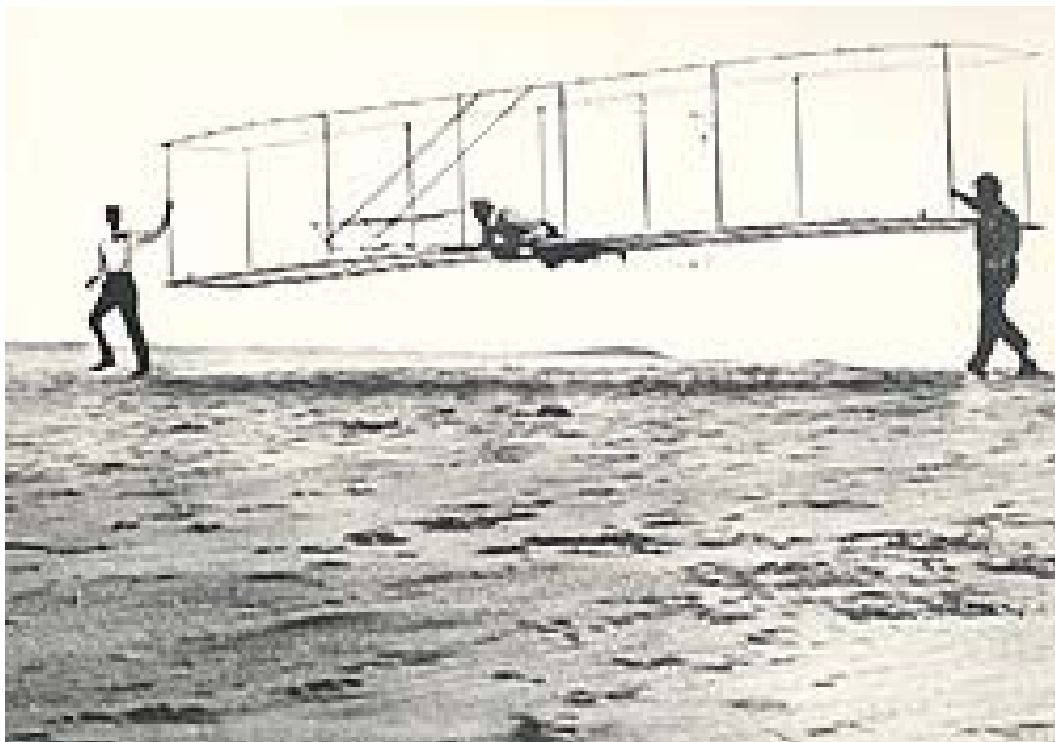
When the Wright Brothers reached Elizabeth City on July 11, 1901, it was Bill Tate who wired the message that he could meet them there with his sailboat “any hour you wish.”<sup>99</sup> Tate escorted the Wright Brothers to his own home to stay the night in Kitty Hawk. The following day Tate carted their crates to Kill Devil Hill and assisted them in erecting their temporary tent. The Wright Brothers wanted to ensure that they had the right to build near Kill Devil Hill, so Tate took them over to Captain Hayman’s house and acted as a mediator between the two negotiating parties. The grizzled great-grandson of a derelict Englishman, Hayman was taken back by their request:

There’s a lot of room out on the beach...the neighbors let their cattle graze on my land- but I don’t care. I would not want to drive the beasts to other pasture...What’ll you do with the land? (Wrights responded by telling him of their flying experiments)...Flying experiments? Ha! Ha! A dog’s hind leg-fly in the air!...Boys, go down on the beach and use it all you like.<sup>100</sup>

Tate insisted on a formal agreement to lease the land, so that Hayman would not renege on his initial grant of permission to the Wright Brothers. In the end, Orville was excited that the site was “leased for the munificent sum of \$1.50 for the season.”<sup>101</sup> Once the deal for the land was complete, Tate suggested the Wright Brothers hire local Carpenter Oliver O’Neal to build workshop-living quarters and suggested that they also hire his stepbrother Dan Tate as a day laborer. Once Dan Tate was hired, it sparked a two-year partnership with the Wright brothers. This partnership was a major reason why the Wright Brothers were up and flying only two and a half years from his date of hire.

The Wright Brothers first met Dan Tate in late August of 1902 when he ferried them from the Kitty Hawk inlet to a small port opposite the camp at Kill Devil Hills.

Tate's spritsail boat was tossed around on the rough waters of the Sound, but the Wright Brothers were quite impressed with his ability to maneuver in such bad conditions. After helping the Wright Brothers unload their crates, "they went by horse cart over the dunes, having to get out and push part of the way."<sup>102</sup> The Wright Brothers were quite anxious to begin their wind tunnel experiments, but they had to spend eleven days just getting their facilities back in order. Dan Tate was essential to their expedient repairs in "driving a deeper well, raising the ends of the building where the sand had blown away, laying foundation posts for better support, constructing a combination kitchen and dining-room addition, 'upholstering' their table and dining room chairs with burlap, adding bunks in the rafters, weatherproofing the exterior of the building, and tar-papering the roof."<sup>103</sup> Like so many of his fellow Outer Banks residents, Dan Tate possessed a diverse array of skills. Tate's subsistence depended on his adapting to the needs of the local people since he had not been afforded any kind of secondary education when he was younger.



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Dan Tate also proved to be a competent wildlife and small-animal exterminator. The camp was being overrun with wildlife that was both large and small, so Tate proved to have the “local touch” in terms of leading the animals away from the Wright Brothers everyday experiments. The local mouse population drove the Brothers to distraction, “a problem they tried to solve by means considerably less ingenious than what they applied to the flight problem. They baited homemade traps with bits of cornbread, chased mice with sticks, and blazed away at them indoors with guns.”<sup>105</sup> Dan Tate was the most effective at driving the wild hogs from the beach away from the campsite. Tate showed the Wright Brothers how to use tent pegs in order to throw them as weapons at the wild hogs. The best time to attack the wild hogs, according to Tate, were when they “laid himself down on its former site to sun himself,” which usually happened after the hog had overturned one of the Brother’s chicken coop and had found himself an easy meal.<sup>106</sup> Dan Tate was able to secure the Wright Brother’s camp from outside distractions as best as possible. Without his daily-assistance the Wright Brothers’ food supply would have been jeopardized by the hogs and mice, and the same culprits would have chewed through their gliders.

Dan Tate became essential to the Wright Brothers, because Bill Tate’s presence ceased to exist that season. Bill Tate had moved north from Kitty Hawk to Martins Point to oversee a large tract of land and a lumber operation for an absentee business owner. Bill Tate was no longer a staple in the everyday camp of the Wright Brothers. Dan became their principle employee-bringing them supplies, doing touch-up work on the camp building, carrying one wing of the glider upon launches, and even notifying the Brothers of the daily weather reports. Tate was a key intermediary employee until the

Wright Brothers' professional guests were able to venture to the Outer Banks. Some of these distinguished visitors were Octave Chanute and George Spratt who were well-respected visionaries and published authors on the subject of human flight. "On days when Dan didn't come out to camp, they could do no more than kite their glider."<sup>107</sup> When the Wright Brothers had family come to visit like their older brother Lorin, Dan Tate would be their escort. For example, on a few occasions Dan took Lorin on a fishing trip for a few hours while the Brothers continued to work. Dan Tate, "usually the senior man in camp, was forty-one," so he had lived on the Outer Banks since the end of the Civil War and had survived in a great deal of isolation from the mainland. Tate was probably such an effective employee for the Brothers, because he knew the local terrain so well and made ends meet doing odd jobs. The odd jobs like ferrying people across the Sound, commercial fishing trips, and all-around handyman for the Wright Brothers came to represent the diverse and dependable people that the Wright Brothers encountered while performing their experiments. The ability for one man to perform such diverse arrays of tasks, while being a strong ambassador to the local people was quite invaluable to the Wright Brothers.

Equally important, Dan Tate was an ambassador to the local people and did much to help tie the Wright Brothers into the local culture. Tate generated a great deal of local interest among the local people including: Kitty Hawk farmer George W. Twyford, fisherman Walter Best, twelve-year-old John Collins, John Moss, a Mr. Hollowell, and a Reverend Davis, besides the ever-present surfmen.<sup>108</sup> The Wright Brothers were frequently invited to Kitty Hawk for amateur theatricals or other events to peruse as guests in the evening or on Sundays. The events on Sundays capped off an entire

morning of prayers and worshipping for the Kitty Hawk men who were largely made up of people belonging to Methodist denominations. In return the Brothers would invite the local people out to the campsite and prepare dinner for them. A popular local pastime among the men of Kitty Hawk was target shooting with .22 rifles. Here the Wrights would unleash their competitive spirit and take their minds off of their experiments. In addition to target shooting, “the Wright killed seagulls...and studied how the wings flapped and the bones were put together.”<sup>109</sup> Tate was able to use his connections with the Wrights in order to generate more income and odd jobs for himself, since the locals began to see the Wright Brothers as models of success with Tate’s help. The cultural exchange that took place in these social interactions between the Wright Brothers and the locals bred an infatuation for the Wright Brothers with the Outer Banks and its people. Dan Tate seemed to be the perfect replacement host for his stepbrother in terms of work ethic, availability, and willingness to network the Wright Brothers to the locals as links to mainland society.

Dan Tate provided the Wright Brothers with the only society they knew on the Outer Banks. A special occasion was a dinner at Dan Tate’s house, where the main course was wild goose, a meal that was quite unfamiliar to the Wrights from Ohio. Tate would warn the Brothers that the “wild gamey flavor,” might seem unpleasant to their taste, but the locals attending the dinner were pleased to hear them say: “Please pass the platter...I want some more of that wild gamey flavor.”<sup>110</sup> The main course meal of wild goose was a welcomed change from a diet that was overly dependant on fish. The dinners Dan and Bill Tate hosted sparked interesting conversation between the Wright Brothers and the local people, including the surfmen, some of whom had assisted the

Brothers at camp for awhile and some who would quickly jump on the flight bandwagon. By the 1903 season the Wright Brothers were dining with Bill Etheridge and the crew at the lifesaving stations every once in a while. Dan Tate, like his stepbrother, was able to market the Brothers to the local Kitty Hawkens in order to rally the entire village around their experiments. The local response proved to be overwhelming to the Wright Brothers in terms of invention as the rallying call around their experiments was immense.

By the 1903 season, the Wright Brothers' healthy relationship with Dan Tate began to deteriorate quickly. Dan was a commercial fisherman at heart, but had become a staple in the camp over the past couple years performing the previously mentioned odd jobs. It became clear that Tate was having second thoughts about his role in the Wright Brothers' camp. According to Orville, about two weeks after the Wrights arrived, Dan showed up in camp one morning, "announced that the price of fish had gone up, and asked whether the brothers would require his help again that year, and for how long. If so, he wanted his salary increased, and he wanted to be paid weekly."<sup>111</sup> The Wrights agreed to up the incentive to seven dollars a week-nearly double the local rate, because he was such a crucial part to their experiments, but the Brothers wanted to formalize the agreement. The Wrights demanded that Tate be present in camp by 8 a.m. every morning and that he would work a minimum ten-hour day, with an hour allotted each day for travel to and from home. The Wright offered to fix him dinner each night in addition to the other stipulations. The disparity between the task versus time oriented economy and workforce was the major difference between what the Wrights were used to in Ohio and the way Dan Tate and the rest of the Outer Bankers had always worked. Dan Tate was one of the Outer Bankers who refused to participate in the modernization process,

because of suspicions or fears of the modernization process. The way of life had not changed in Kitty Hawk for a hundred years, which caused many of the residents to retain their traditional sets of values at all cost. Dan Tate would have likely been able to better his socio-economic status had he been able to adapt and evolve with the modernization of the workforce that the Wrights brought to the region.

The contractual terms that the Brothers came to terms on with Dan Tate only made their relationship and working environment worse. Without warning, the Wrights discovered that Tate's carpentry skills began to taper and his overall demeanor had changed from "immediate helper" to I will get to it when I can. As Orville put it, "Whenever we set him at any work about the building, he would do so much damage with his awkwardness that we found it more profitable to let him sit around."<sup>112</sup> The Wrights found it crucial that they employ someone that could be on hand whenever the weather conditions suited the testing of their gliders. The Wrights were very willing to pay someone like Dan Tate for a considerable amount of idle time, as long as he was willing to perform immediately when called upon. Assistance in the flying experiments and small menial tasks during the downtime was essential in the Wright Brothers' experiments and they expected Tate's uncomplaining help for the wages they paid him. Dan Tate had quite a different perspective than the Brothers, because he was accustomed to a slow, monotonous life living off of the sea, so once he found that he was no better than a maid to the Wright Brothers he became frustrated. The rural sense of time and place was one of the things that frustrated the Wrights, especially when it affected the way their lone paid-employee worked. Dan Tate was accustomed to completing tasks when he could get around to it as an odd-job laborer, but the constraints of deadlines is



part of the modernization of the workforce that the Wrights brought with them. Cleaning the dishes and collecting driftwood from the beach on cold November days was not the idea of ideal employment for Dan Tate, so he “took his hat and left for home” and did not return.<sup>113</sup>

Bill Tate continued his dedication to the Wright Brothers during the 1903 season through constant correspondence between he and Dan Tate and also between Wilbur and Orville, even though he would not see much of them due to his new job in Martins Point, about five miles north of Kitty Hawk. Bill had received a letter from Wilbur in the spring of 1903 to venture over to Kill Devil Hill to negotiate terms for a permit from Captain Hayman in order to build a new shed. Tate replied to Wilbur, in his usual manner, by saying that he would gladly negotiate with the landlord, but he was skeptical as to whether the owner would be “as enthusiastic as you suggested about the immortalization of their soil, & the Cash donation Biz.”<sup>114</sup> Bill Tate is suggesting here that Hayman would likely seek as much as five dollars for the season this time, which was a \$3.50 increase from the 1901 season, because he recognized that the Wright’s demand for the land would continue to go up as long as their invention continued on the same path of progress. The “Cash donation Biz” part of Tate’s letter seems to a reponse to sarcasm on Wilbur’s part, where he jokes that Hayman should begin to pay the Brothers to use the dune or lower the rent since Kill Devil Hill would soon become very famous, and thus increase the value of the land. After negotiations went smoothly for Bill, he reminded the Brothers to buy a barrel of gasoline at Standard Oil in Norfolk upon their arrival and also asserted that he now had his own gasoline launch in Martin Point at his new job there. Bill Tate must have been well aware of the deterioration of the relationship between his

stepbrother and the Wright Brothers, because in a letter to Wilbur he apologized that Dan “played the fool and left you...If I can be of service to you any time let me know.”<sup>115</sup> Bill would have dropped any job he held at the time in order to be on any assistance to the Wright Brothers, but once the first flight was over (Bill Tate did not make it to Kill Devil Hill that day) the Wright Brothers decided that they could now simply conduct flights in the flat, open fields around Dayton, Ohio.

Following the first flight on December 17, 1903, the Wright Brothers did not return to the Outer Banks until 1908 when they began to feel threatened by competing aviation experiments by people like Samuel Langley up in Washington, D.C. By August of 1906 Bill Tate asked the Brothers if he could take ownership over their 1903 campsite and offered to send anything left behind to them in Ohio. When the Wright Brothers informed Bill that they would keep the buildings in their possession, it meant that there might be possible future use. Bill Tate and his family began writing letters to the Brothers asserting “we often think of you” and “the fun we had as very pleasant recollections,” meant that Tate’s life felt empty without the life investment in the Wright Brothers’ annual experiments.<sup>116</sup> Bill Tate had given so much of his time and effort to the Wright Brothers, so it was difficult for him to be consoled for that fact that he was not present for their first flight. Despite his absence on the fateful day:

Tate was in a position to cash in on his intimacy with the Wrights and their work. He had received a telegram from the New York Journal offering ‘good pay’ for a six hundred-word article. The Norfolk Dispatch spoke for five-hundred words, Tate replying, probably not having seen the December 18 *Pilot* story that the ‘experiment was conducted Very secretly and nothing will be learned.’<sup>117</sup>

Tate’s dedication to the work of the Wright Brothers was never more apparent than at this time when he turned down any monetary gains by denying the newspapers and

magazines to write an immediate article. Tate would write about his experiences with the Wright Brothers later in his life, but refrained from jeopardizing the Wright Brothers' monopoly on the aviation world. Tate did not want to immediately disclose the Wrights' secrets about building airplanes and how they actually managed to conduct their heavier-than-air flights, because the Wrights were in constant court battles over their re-issued patents.

Once the fame of the Wright Brothers was asserted by the countless numbers of reporters permanently stationed on the Outer Banks between 1908-1911, the story of the interaction between the Wright Brothers and Bill Tate seem to fade into oblivion. Wilbur Wright passed away on May 29, 1912; due to contaminated shellfish he had eaten while performing a flight demonstration in Boston. The cause of death was some type of typhoid fever due to food poisoning, so Orville Wright was left to run the Wright Company himself. Orville Wright was thought to have never returned to the Outer Banks until the dedication of the Wright Brothers National Monument in 1932. However, "in his 1990 interview with the National Park Service, Elmer Woodard, Jr.-grandson of Bill Tate-recalled that Orville made four or five trips to Kill Devil Hills in connection with the national memorial honoring the Wright Brothers, as well as one trip strictly for nostalgia. Those are more than usually reckoned."<sup>118</sup>

According to Woodard, there were a series of visits between Bill Tate and Orville Wright that were intended as a private matter from 1915 onward as Tate became Captain Tate. Captain Bill Tate became the keeper of the Long Point Lighthouse at Coinjock, North Carolina, which is located on the mainland in Currituck County. "Orville would supposedly telephone Tate at the lighthouse to arrange a meeting time, always referring

to himself cryptically as ‘the main party’ or some other such name, so his identity would not be picked up by people listening in on the party line.”<sup>119</sup> Whatever time the two parties decided upon meant that Orville would take Tate toward Kill Devil Hills in his custom automobile. The exact nature of the encounters and dates of the private visits will likely never be found. Nonetheless, the secrecy of Orville’s visits to the Outer Banks to only see Bill Tate suggests that they had a special bond both professionally and personally. The nostalgia for Orville likely lied in the fact that he became a world-famous inventor of flight, and this little lighthouse keeper in Bill Tate deserves just as much credit, but will never receive it. Bill Tate was the cornerstone that human flight was built upon.

Bill Tate was the lone North Carolinian to keep in touch with Orville after Wilbur’s death in 1912. After 1911, many North Carolinians lost all interest in what the Wright brothers had done in their own backyard and had no sense of pride for the accomplishments having taken place on their home soil. Tate saw this as a complete abomination and wanted to immediately arouse interest in the men who had achieved the first flight. “Aviation, he firmly believed, had its start in his Kitty Hawk front yard, where the first Wright glider was assembled.”<sup>120</sup> The history textbooks that were released in 1911, 1916, 1923, and 1930 by North Carolina historian R.D.W. Connor completed left out any mention of the Wright brothers’ flights having taken place in North Carolina. There was no mention of the Wright brothers until 1933, because many historians believed that North Carolina had simply been a sandy surface for take off and landing for the Wright brothers. Tate decided to take it upon himself to make sure the Wright’s legacy would live on forever in North Carolina.

Tate was the most qualified person to complete the task of reviving interest in the Wright brothers as he had known them longer than any other Tar Heel and he was one of the only people on the Outer Banks to have any kind of secondary schooling. Tate had been given his formal education at the Oxford Masonic Orphanage, Kitty Hawk High School, and Atlantic Christian Institute in Elizabeth City, and was an established civic leader in Dare and Currituck Counties.<sup>121</sup> Through writing articles and pamphlets about the Wright brothers' effect on the Outer Banks and their legacy, Tate was able to rekindle interest in the brothers by the 1920s. Tate came to be recognized as the unofficial spokesman for the Wrights in North Carolina whenever someone needed an answer on the subject of the invention of flight.

## **Chapter 3- No More Lagging Behind**

Orville Wright left Dayton, Ohio, on a cold December day in 1928 in order to attend the International Civil Aeronautics Conference in Washington, D.C. Once the conference ended, he and two hundred of the delegates were scheduled to venture for the North Carolina coast in order to lay the foundation for a Wright Brothers monument. The entire group of people steamed down the Potomac River, and into the enclosed waters of the Chesapeake Bay until they reached Norfolk, Virginia, where they stayed the night. The next day a hoard of buses escorted the mob of delegates to the North Carolina border where they were met by Governor Angus McLean of North Carolina and were directed to the village of Currituck. Orville was astounded to see that sixty-five private automobiles were waiting to take the large party to Point Harbor on Currituck Sound. For old times sake, Orville suggested that the large party take the boat trip over to Kitty Hawk that he and his brother had done so many times, because people no longer had to do so. It was during this boat trip that the ferry became grounded in the shallow sound, and while grounded, Governor MacLean and Congressman Warren conceived of the idea of establishing the United States' first national seashore park. This dream was later realized with the establishment of Cape Hatteras National Seashore.<sup>122</sup>

When they finally landed on the Outer Banks, the members of the party boarded a hundred cars that were donated for the occasion by local citizens. According to one report, the dirt roads that lead through the woods and swamps were difficult to navigate, but proved to be an easy task in comparison to the sand dunes around Kill Devil Hill.

En route, they were joined in their pilgrimage by a crowd estimated by the *New York Times* at three to four thousand people, traveling mostly on foot. It was a spectacle unlike any ever seen in the area. As the *Times* put it, "There were

hundreds of boys and girls who some day will learn to fly, mothers trudging through the blowing, stinging sand with babies in their arms, and old men who have never yet seen an airplane fly.”<sup>123</sup>

The people in attendance at the ceremony was striking as the guest list included famed pilot Amelia Earhart, faithful friend Bill Tate, surfman John Daniels, surfman Adam Etheridge, surfman William Dough, and first-flight witness Johnny Moore. As was typical, Orville seemed unmoved by the ceremony and he gave no speech or public thanks. What mattered to him was what land donors and monument developers were going to do with the actual Kill Devil Hill. Ultimately, United States Army Quartermaster Corps called upon Captain John A. Gilman, whose previous endeavors included designing the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery, and his assistant Captain William H. Kindervarter to relocate to Kill Devil Hills with their families for a few years. The construction contract was awarded to the firm of Willis, Taylor, and Mafera out of New York who copied the base of the Statue of Liberty for the Wright Brothers Monument. This initial planning stage and the ultimate dedication of the monument in 1932 demonstrated the impact the Wright Brothers had on the community for the past thirty years in terms of “opening” the region to the outside world that reached far beyond the North Carolina mainland.<sup>124</sup>

This chapter seeks to show how the Wright brothers’ presence on the Outer Banks caused the region to evolve from a barren, pre-industrial wasteland into the commercialized, developed vacation “New South” destination that it is today. The initial national media coverage on the Outer Banks, was the first time that an event on the Outer Banks had been covered by any media outlets. This media exposure caused many new people from domestic and foreign media outlets to venture to the Outer Banks region.

These people brought with them capital to inject into the local economy, that was forced to accommodate the large amounts of visitors by establishing the foundations of a modern infrastructure. Through efforts by local leaders, like Bill Tate, they were able to have the Outer Banks recognized by Congress for their history in accommodating the Wright brothers. Congress awarded Kill Devil Hills with the Wright Brothers National Monument, which sparked further development. All of a sudden, the building of roads and bridges to connect the Outer Banks to mainland North Carolina were imminent.<sup>125</sup> Once the Outer Banks was more easily accessible to the mainland, commercial and private real estate developers from the northern and Mid-Atlantic States began to buy up the land and build on it. The presence of the Wright brothers on the Outer Banks was the catalyst that put all of these developments in motion. The children of the Outer Banks surfmen were the first generation that was able to compete against people from the mainland for jobs due to the influence of the Wrights. The local surfmen were able to capitalize on the legacy of the Wright brothers in order to create a resort and beach community that not only glorified the Wrights, but also helped future generations of Outer Bankers adapt to modern culture and society.<sup>126</sup>

The local Outer Bankers first knew the Wright Brothers were bringing about change in their community when they returned for more experiments in 1902. Many of the “beach people” questioned their financial stability because Orville and Wilbur’s presence drove up food prices. At Theo Meekins’s Manteo store the brothers would sporadically buy beans, apples, canned goods, eggs, salt, and salt pork. The rations they bought for themselves were quite minimal because they “just didn’t have the money” and “denied themselves all luxuries and many...necessities” in order to reach their ultimate



goal of inventing heavier-than-air flight.<sup>1127</sup> In late 1902, Bill Tate estimated that their food cost was between five to eight dollars per month, which included eggs from housewives and frequent orders place from Elizabeth City. The Wrights were constantly asked why they kept so many eggs at their camp, and Wilbur replied contently: “See that little black hen over there? She lays six eggs every day.” Orville was widely regarded as a great chef, but surfman William Dough asserted that the brothers dined simply.<sup>128</sup>

During the fall of 1902 the Wright brothers’ activities at Kill Devil Hill caught the attention of Walter L. Cahoon, who was the editor of the *Elizabeth City Tar Heel*. It is likely that Cahoon met Lorin Wright, the oldest Wright brother, who passed through Elizabeth City, on his way to Kitty Hawk to visit Wilbur and Orville. Later in the week the *Tar Heel* printed an astounding article, which turned out to be the first public notification of what the Wrights were actually doing on the Outer Banks. The article was entitled “Men Will Fly.”<sup>129</sup> The article asserted that the brothers would soon attach an electric motor and propeller in order to “vie with the birds in flight, defying gravity and adverse winds.”<sup>130</sup> This report was the most accurate account of their experiments before 1904, but seemed to go widely unnoticed in places like Elizabeth City, because the town’s first automobile had arrived in July of 1902. Nonetheless, the article was reprinted in the *Raleigh News and Observer* and people began to catch wind of the Wrights experiments. “In September a sound-side excursion steamer had come in close to the camp, perhaps so passengers might glimpse the gliding.”<sup>131</sup>

Visitors like Alpheus Drinkwater were the first people to visit Kitty Hawk and Kill Devil Hill that essentially began the integration of the Outer Banks with the mainland. By November of 1903, the Wrights were ready to test their *Flyer* that was

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mounted with a motor. Alpheus Drinkwater, a jovial telegrapher from Currituck Beach Lifesaving Station up the coast, traveled down to Kitty Hawk in order to repair a spliced wire in early December 1903. The time of year that Drinkwater ventured to the Wright's camp suggests that he was curious about their experiences and not just traveling to fix the wire. Drinkwater devoted all of his time to matters of consequence and was constantly searching the place of real action. "His telegrams brought tugs from Norfolk to save ships grounded in the shoals. He must watch for 'big news breaks' and could ill-afford 'to spend much time away down here.'"<sup>132</sup> According to Drinkwater's own personal account, it is unlikely that the Wrights invited him down to their camp in order to report the progress-taking place in their experiments. Surfman William Dough backs up the Wrights by saying that they "never issues official invitations... They just talked it around, you know."<sup>133</sup> A telegrapher who would send any type of press would cause a stir, because any press was good press for the Wright Brothers and the local Outer Bankers. Drinkwater's ability to reach Norfolk with his telegrams asserts the fact that the news could then easily be relayed to Washington, D.C., and then all over the eastern seaboard. Once many of the region's major newspapers caught wind of Drinkwater's telegraph messages, many editors began to send reporters down to Kitty Hawk and Kill Devil Hills as seasonal residents.<sup>134</sup>

Once the first flight had taken place on December 17, 1903, the Dayton newspaper, like many others, rejected the news as a fabricated story. Initially, only the *Norfolk Virginian-Pilot* correctly informed of the first powered flight as they carried a version of the story the next morning. According to Historian Thomas Parramore, "the *Pilot's* account, largely fabricated and wildly inaccurate, was still a classic sloop in

journalistic annals, by the same paper that, eight months before, had scorned the *Charlotte Observer* for believing that ‘We will yet fly.’”<sup>135</sup> Over the next few weeks many newspapers printed the news but it was usually in the form of a general Associated Press media release. The editors of large newspapers regularly rejected claims of the first flight, but as the facts readily began to present themselves, they began to send many congratulations to the Wright Brothers in Dayton.

The Wright brothers did not return to the Outer Banks until 1908, then the media coverage really started to takeoff. The new hindrance on their experiments during that season was the presence of a *New York Herald* reporter. Once a series of articles were printed in the *Herald* over the next few weeks more journalists began to arrive. The Wrights refused to fly whenever the reporters came closer than a mile from their camp, which essentially meant that the reporters were exiled to some woods at Hayman’s Bay on the sound. The Wright did not want to fly when the reporters were close, because they did not want the press to hear the conversations they were having or be able to view their blueprints and diagrams. If the press overheard the conversations between Wilbur and Orville, then they may have misquoted one of the brothers in an article or even let their design secrets out.<sup>136</sup>

The constant media presence showed that Wilbur and Orville were becoming renown, so the dunes people from all over the Outer Banks were treating them with a revived respect. The *Charlotte Observer* pointed out that “people of that section...take much interest in the new machine and are aiding the Wrights in every way possible” as they always had.<sup>137</sup> By the beginning of May in 1908, only three weeks after the brothers had arrived at Kitty Hawk, there was a reporter from the *London Daily Mail* and two

from *Collier's* magazine present. The foreign and domestic press witnessed each flight in May, including one of Orville's flights on May 11 where he covered 8, 200 feet.

Surfman John Daniels found it funny that the reporters hid in the bushes over a mile away and were able to 'conduct' exclusive "interviews with the Wrights...But I reckon they had to earn their money somehow."<sup>138</sup>

Walter L. Cahoon's *Elizabeth City Tar Heel* was the closest paper to the Kitty Hawk camp, but began to rely on distant reports from the *New York Herald* and the *London Daily Mail*. North Carolina press coverage ranged from exaggeration to nonexistent as the larger newspapers in the *Raleigh News and Observer* and the *Wilmington Morning Star* ignored the flights altogether. The *Charlotte Observer* was the only North Carolina paper to embrace the Wright's flights. In the summer of 1908 the Wrights left the Outer Banks to tour Europe giving demonstrations of flight to the European militaries<sup>139</sup>. Having sold many airplanes to the various governments they returned to the Outer Banks in September of 1908 to perfect the model they would sell to the different European countries. The editor of the *Elizabeth City Advance*, Herbert Peele, observed that the Wrights "were the cynosure of all eyes," and were "more communicative now...and a great deal more socialable, fame and riches having made them magnanimous and charitably inclined."<sup>140</sup> The global celebrity of the Wrights was catalyst that sparked major interest from not only the North Carolina papers, but also the national press coverage that seemed to trump the local press.

In the fall of 1908 the Wright Brothers were competing for press coverage with the Ohio State Fair, the Barnum and Bailey circus, baseball's World Series, and various college football games. The national press presence on the Outer Banks pumped a lot of

new money into the local economy, which caused the demand for food, hotels, and transportation to go up quickly. All of a sudden the local commercial fishermen began to make steady money from the reporters who were stationed on the Outer Banks for weeks at a time. The homes of the lifesaving station surfmen served as 'bed and breakfast' inns since there were only sporadic hotels a few miles north in Manteo and much farther south. The local infrastructure could not handle such an influx of people, so the national press coverage of the Wright brothers was certainly the 'tipping point' that began the modernization process on the Outer Banks.<sup>141</sup>

The most important reporter to venture to the Outer Banks to cover the Wright brothers' flights was Byron Newton of the *New York Herald*. While covering the unfolding events of flight at Kitty Hawk in his first season of 1908, Newton stayed at the Tranquil House in Manteo. Newton was a star reporter who originally hailed from Allegany County, New York, and had achieved his degree from Oberlin College in Ohio, which happened to be Katharine Wright's alma mater. In 1908, Newton was forty-six-years-old and had become such a well known journalistic through his well travels having provided excellent coverage of the Spanish-American War in 1898 for the Associated Press. Newton brought a big city mentality to his coverage of the Wright brothers as he had worked at the *Herald* since 1902. There was a strong skepticism in his articles he wrote about the Wright brothers, as he seemed to question whether they had ever achieved a heavier-than-air flight.<sup>142</sup> Newton questioned the brothers' accomplishment, because he had heard much of Samuel Langley's attempted flights along the Potomac River in Washington, D.C., as it was more in the public eye in an urban setting.

Initially, Newton was highly critical of coastal North Carolina as a whole, likely because he had been through an extremely difficult journey from Elizabeth City to Manteo. A few days after he arrived at Kitty Hawk he asserted that the people of the Outer Banks were:

Well nigh as ignorant of the modern world as if they lived in the depths of Africa. The sound of steam locomotive is as unknown to them as the music of Mars. The automobile is as much a myth to them as Noah's Ark and the flying machine across the sound they regarded as a sea serpent yarn invented by Yankee reporters, the first strangers since the Civil War to invade their island domain.<sup>143</sup>

Newton's bias against the rural Outer Banks stemmed from the fact that he was a "big city" reporter that reported on "big city" events and people. Newton had never seen the Wright brothers' glider flights or studied any of their work, so he really had no basis for his judgments other than his own personal arrogance. Newton's opinion quickly changed when he saw the Wright's daily operation.

The next day when Newton finally saw the Wright brothers fly he generalized his opinion on the matter by saying that "thinking men and women of our generation have in store a great treat when they shall have the good fortune first to witness the marvel of man's creation...It brings a special exhilaration. It is different from the contemplation of any other marvel human eyes may behold in a life time."<sup>144</sup> Newton knew that his outside perception of the Wright brothers had been completely skewed by the natural bias that existed in the North towards Southern people and Southern institutions. Within a week of covering the flights, Newton and his colleague Bruce Salley were the most seasoned veterans in terms of aeronautic journalism. Each day more and more members of the press would arrive on the Outer Banks including reporters and photographers from *London Daily Mail* and *Collier's Magazine*. The reporters became extremely captivated

by the flights as Jimmy Hare's memorable photograph "shows the reporters tramping across the sand in various stages of undress, struggling up a dune, camping in the woods, and, pant legs rolled, applying medication to their badly bitten legs."<sup>145</sup>

The reporters had been completely wrong about the Wright brothers' day-to-day operation and the extent of their successes in terms of flight. The presence of the hoards of press corps on the Outer Banks caused the local people to adapt to outsiders seemingly being ever-present. There was an unspoken idea that private services such as fishing, ferrying, and room and board were all of a sudden extremely public institutions. The Wrights grew fond of the reporters and journalists being around their Camp, because the members of the press knew they were not permitted to be within a mile of their Camp.

Orville replied to Newton's letter of admiration by saying:

We were aware of the presence of newspaper men in the woods at Kill Devil Hills, at least we had often been told that they were there. Their presence, however, did not bother us in the least, and I am only sorry that you did not come over to see us at our camp. The display of a white flag would have disposed of the rifles and shot guns which the machine is reported to have been guarded.<sup>146</sup>

The reporters were amazed at the very close relationship that the Wrights possessed with the local surfmen. The curious thing to the reporters was that the Wrights did not give these men any monetary compensation for their services at all, yet they still showed up at their camp quite often. However, the reporters realized why the surfmen wanted to be a part of the invention of flight as often as possible once they realized their own captivation with flight even as secluded viewers, a mile away.

Once the Wrights were financially secure in 1908 they began to consider the idea of closing their bicycle business in Dayton to concentrate solely on full-time flight experimentation. In early 1912 Wilbur wrote a letter to a close friend asserting the

brothers “wished to be free from cares so that we could give our own time to...the science and the art of aviation.”<sup>147</sup> Solely concentrating on the science of aviation suggested that the brothers wanted to establish a facility on the Outer Banks that was dedicated to aviation. The complex they intended to establish would certainly have moved North Carolina and the Outer Banks to the forefront of international aviation. The Wright brothers would pick up the option on the lease they had with John J. Mann’s tract of land that stretched from the ocean to Croatan Bay, which stated that after so many years the brothers could submit an offer to buy the one thousand acres. The Wright brothers, during the winter and spring of 1912, planned on building “a combination hangar and laboratory of concrete” with a possible “bungalow for living purposes...the only structure of its kind in Dare County.”<sup>148</sup>

The proposed Wright brothers’ building was to be “for the permanent testing of aeroplanes,” and would certainly be built “much larger than the old (1911) building and will be thoroughly equipped for aeroplane building.” The concrete walls would provide unprecedented protection from the rough weather of the Outer Banks with constant sand blasting and the occasional hurricane-like winds. Wilbur and Orville wanted the building to be big enough in order to hold two airplanes side-by-side with a carpenter shop and storage loft in the rear.<sup>149</sup> The remote nature of the Outer Banks would give the brothers a constant experimental privacy, as opposed to urbanized Dayton, Ohio, but the Wrights would still have easy communication with the outside world: the building would be ten miles from the Manteo telegraph office, six miles from the Kitty Hawk post office, and one mile from the telephone line at Kill Devil Hill Lifesaving Station. The railroad at Elizabeth City would still be forty miles from the aviation complex, but a daily “shuttle”



ran between Manteo and Elizabeth City, and not to mention a thrice-weekly ferry service from Elizabeth City to Kitty Hawk.<sup>150</sup>

The Wright brothers' aviation complex was never built at Kill Devil Hill, because of pending land disputes with local Outer Banks landlords, their preoccupation with their 1906 patent rights, and the untimely May 1912 death of Wilbur. The land disputes stemmed from the fact that one of the large dunes at Kill Devil Hill had moved seventy-five feet due to high winds and other means of erosion since the tract had last been surveyed in 1903. Wilbur and Orville's brother Lorin Wright built the 1911 hangar, so it was his error that caused the land dispute with Bob Wescott who claimed that the hangar was on his land and therefore belonged to him. The brothers refused to begin building the aviation complex until the issue was completely resolved. Wilbur and Orville were also dealing with a pending lawsuit that dealt with other flight inventor's access to their blueprints and ideas on flight. The lawsuit was the most pressing matter to their day-to-day operation, so the aviation complex was put on the backburner. The entire dream for the aviation complex was killed when on May 30, 1912, Wilbur was killed by typhoid fever, which he believed to have contracted from bad shellfish he ate while conducting business in New England. Once Wilbur had passed away, Orville retired from the airplane business for good.<sup>151</sup>

The permanent airplane complex on the Outer Banks would have vaulted North Carolina to the forefront of aviation technology and other high-tech industry. Starting in 1911, Tar Heel mechanics were experimenting with many varying forms of flying machines that were "spin-offs" from the Wright design. Had there been a permanent Wright presence on the Outer Banks efforts like these towards aviation progress would

have become largely intensified. Artisans and mechanics from across the state eventually could have found employment at the Wright aviation complex, and many of the local Outer Bankers could have been hired as skilled laborers that physically built the airplanes. As Historian Thomas Parramore put it, “thus Wilbur’s death apparently denied North Carolina a chance to become a focal point in global aeronautics and aviation on the mainland as well as the Outer Banks. No such opportunity would arise again in the twentieth century.”<sup>152</sup>

The Wright brothers’ de-isolation of the Outer Banks allowed many of the surfmen’s and local’s children to succeed in gaining employment outside of the Outer Banks and North Carolina. A major event showcasing this fact happened in 1917 when lighthouse keeper Bill Tate quickly responded to a crashed seaplane on the Outer Banks that was flying from New Jersey to West Palm Beach, Florida. The young pilot’s named was Ben Severn whose summer business was taking Atlantic City residents sightseeing over the New Jersey coast in his plane, and he now desired to do the same for Florida residents in the winter months. Severn was taken into the Tate’s home to recover from minor injuries where he met Tate’s nineteen-year-old daughter, and they were both immediately attracted to each other. “He marveled to learn that she had known the Wrights before they became famous, that the first glider was assembled in her front yard, that she and her sister Lena had once worn clothes made from the first glider’s wing cloth.”<sup>153</sup> Irene had attended high school and nursing school in Norfolk, Virginia, so she had seen few planes since the Wright’s 1908 model. After Severn’s plane was repaired he sent his crew of companions onto Florida while he stayed to pursue his relationship

with Irene Tate. The two were quickly married on April 28, 1917 at Coinjock Baptist Church and “many saw Irene’s union with an airman as the fulfillment of a destiny.”<sup>154</sup>

The Wright brothers’ invention of the airplane directly and indirectly led to Irene Tate being able to relocate with her new husband to New Jersey where she herself was able to take flying lessons and become a pilot. Over the years Irene logged over fifty thousand miles in the air and became the very first woman to fly round-trip between New York and Miami. “It was with the Severns that Bill Tate enjoyed his own first flight in 1918.”<sup>155</sup> There are countless other examples of the children of surfmen becoming pilots, mechanics, journalists, construction contractors, and hotel/restaurant managers due to their experiences on the Outer Banks as children while the Wright brothers were present. For the first time, the children of the surfmen were able to compete for competitive annual incomes on mainland North Carolina and beyond due to the opening of economic exchange, tourism, manufacturing, and investment that became byproducts of the Wrights being present on the Outer Banks.

Bill Tate restored his correspondence with Orville Wright in 1922. Tate knew promote himself as having been the Wright’s first and most prominent contact on the Outer Banks. Tate mentioned his daughter Irene’s marriage in the letters he sent to Orville, and made sure to include the fact that she herself was now a pilot and made frequent visits to Currituck County on her flights from Florida to New Jersey and vice versa. Tate’s oldest son, Elijah, who was born in the winter of 1901 was now working as a motor mechanic for the Curtiss Company.<sup>156</sup> The Tate children owed much of their ability to compete for jobs on the mainland and across the United States to the presence and influence of the Wright brothers having chosen Kitty Hawk as their place for

experiment. The Wrights bringing the first gasoline-powered motor to the Outer Banks in 1901 made Elijah Tate pursuing a career, as a mechanic, possible. The fact that the surfmen's children now had the opportunity to pursue actual careers outside of the Outer Banks suggests that the Wright brothers had a completely indirect and unintentional effect on the future Outer Banks generations.

Even Bill Tate who was as successful as anyone had ever been professionally and financially on the Outer Banks, benefited in the following years after the Wrights were no longer in the aviation business. Tate went on a crusade to publicize himself and his relationship with the Wright brothers as he had personal business cards made up that labeled him as "North Carolina's first contact with famous Wright bros. Original host and confidant of Wright bros. 1900-1903. Original North Carolina aviation booster."<sup>157</sup> Tate used this self-proclaimed position in order to raise funds to eventually erect a Wright Brothers Monument in Kitty Hawk or Kill Devil Hills. Navy Secretary Josephus Daniels joined Tate in his efforts to raise money and awareness for the Wright brothers in 1913, but both of their efforts would not become reality until 1926. On December 17, 1926, First District congressman Lindsey Warren, who was persuaded by Elizabeth City editors W.O. Saunders and Theo Meekins, introduced a bill for a Wright national park or monument to be built at Kill Devil Hills on Capitol Hill. Later that day Hiram Bingham of Connecticut presented a similar bill before the Senate. When the bill finally passed both houses in early 1927 Bill Tate's dream had become a reality.<sup>158</sup>

In February of 1927, Congressman Warren included Bill Tate's name in a speech about the Wright brothers in which he referred to Tate as the keeper of the Wright flame and a proud owner of first flight relics. The speech put the surfman on the map as it

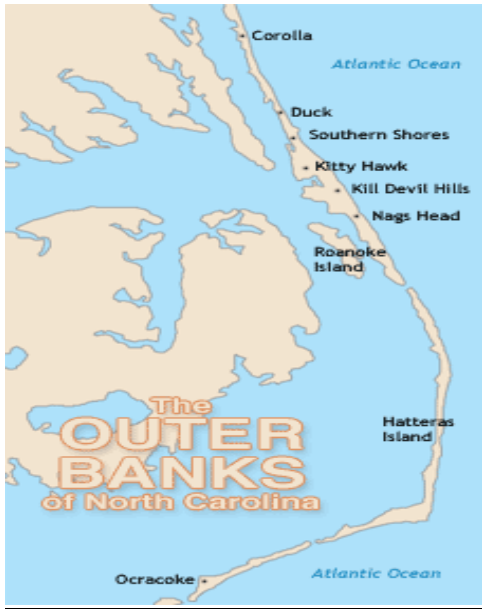
transformed him into a national figure and very much changed the rest of his life. Tate asserted that Congressman Warren had “read me into the congressional record so strong that I was flooded with letters from all over the U.S. and some from Canada.”<sup>159</sup> All of the correspondents were searching for souvenirs, recollections, and an in depth description of his experiences in a book or article. Tate tried to keep up with all of the “fan mail” as he found more and more coming each day, but was unable to dish out artifacts and souvenirs because he had given many of things away years before. All of a sudden Tate was appointed to the position of first keeper of the Wright memorial lighthouse that the current Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover had planned for Kill Devil Hill. Even though Hoover’s proposal for the lighthouse was rejected in favor of the present monument, Tate had become a statewide hero in North Carolina, as he was the subject of many writings by Senators Lee Slater Overman and Furnifold M. Simmons of North Carolina and not to mention Herbert Hoover the future President of the United States.<sup>160</sup>

Once word got around Kitty Hawk and Kill Devil Hills in 1927 that a Wright Brothers Memorial would be erected, there was a renewed sense of interest and vigor in the work of the Wright brothers. In December of 1927, Kitty Hawk High School was renamed for the Wright Brothers in order to give the school a reputation as a legitimate school statewide.<sup>161</sup> Many people started to come out and tell stories of having dined with the Wrights or helping them cart their gear to Kill Devil Hills as these people became quite popular and widely quoted in many publications. Their intimate stories with the Wright brothers pushed them to the forefront of many news publications across the country as the United States started to read about the local Outer Bankers. For

example, surfman John T. Daniels that captured the photograph of the “First Flight” wrote letters to the Smithsonian Institute detailing his involvement during the 1903 season.<sup>162</sup>

When Kill Devil Hill was chosen to be the permanent home of the Wright Brothers National Monument even Orville was shocked, “why no one will ever see it.”<sup>163</sup> Even by the time 1918 rolled around, Kitty Hawk had limited road access, as their roads were what many people would call paths. Nevertheless it revealed the development required to transform the region. Throughout 1928 the village of Kitty Hawk found itself in real-estate overload, as there were constant land transactions and efforts to make the area more readily accessible from the mainland for the thousands of visitors that would venture to the new Monument each year. A Currituck Sound bridge had been proposed in late 1927 to join Kitty Hawk to mainland North Carolina and also a highway and bridge to connect Kitty Hawk, Kill Devil Hill, Nags Head, and Manteo. If these projects were completed then North Carolina state officials would be able to begin progress on a Chowan River span of highway at Edenton as well.

**Map of Outer Banks (depicting it with no roads circa 1900)**



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Map of Outer Banks (depicting it with roads circa 1970)



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Countless land developers and venture capitalists bought up large tracts of beachfront property to use for vacation dwellings. The investments proved to be quite profitable in the long run, because the investors had bought the land on the eve of the Great Depression in an area that had little capital flowing through it. Having invested in real estate and not in the stock market allowed the investors to have more security in their property than most at this point. Frank Stick and an investment partner, two wealthy businessmen from New Jersey, were the present owners of the Hayman tract of land containing Kill Devil Hill that they ended up deeding part of to the federal government for the Wright Brothers National Monument.<sup>166</sup>

The new roads and bridges addressed the problem of mass access to Kill Devil Hill, which in the view of the *Raleigh News and Observer* was “scarcely a more difficult place to go in the state.”<sup>167</sup> Whenever government officials and visitors made the trek to Kill Devil Hill before 1932 they always arrived via Norfolk, but now with the roads and bridge erected they no longer had to drive forty-five miles on jerry-rigged planks of wood that were put in place by tractors. The overstrained ferry services were now able to operate efficiently as those five miles of “doubtful road” from Baum’s wharf to Kill Devil Hill was now obsolete. The establishment of an infrastructure between 1928-1932 coupled with the building of the Wright Brothers Monument caused a direct rise in the amount of investment, tourism, and capital flow on the Outer Banks as a whole. The ability to move people, goods, and services in a timely, efficient manner was something brand new to the Outer Banks and the people quickly embraced it

The project of building the Wright National Monument served a dual purpose of honoring the Wright Brothers while also opening the Outer Banks to development. When



Orville arrived on the Outer Banks in 1928 to see the very first piece of granite put in place for the foundation of the Monument, he was delighted to see that there were a hundred cars waiting to transport him and the other visitors to the site. It was even better news to him that the cars had been donated for the occasion by the local Outer Banks people who were now buying, selling, and driving cars on the newly paved roads. The final project carried an entire cost of \$285,000, which was an extremely large sum of money to inject into the local economy of the Outer Banks coming out of the Great Depression. The Wright Memorial Bridge opened in 1930 as it initially connected Kitty Hawk to the mainland with a section of the road acting as a toll road in order to complete the asphalt paving of the entire highway. When Orville returned to the Outer Banks in November of 1932 for the Monument dedication accessing Kill Devil Hill was much easier as it took half the time to reach the new Monument from Norfolk than it had taken only a few years earlier.

## Conclusion

Orville Wright returned to the Outer Banks for the last time in April of 1939. The “new world” on the Outer Banks he stepped into in 1939 was distinctly different from the place he saw in 1900. The *U.S. Air Services* magazine was the first publication to break the news of this trip that few knew anything about. Orville attended a dinner with President Franklin Roosevelt on April 14, and boarded a steamer the next day that took him to Norfolk, Virginia. The next morning Orville drove south from Norfolk to pick up Bill Tate at the Long Point Lighthouse, where he was now the lifesaving captain just to the north of Kill Devil Hills, and ventured farther south to visit Kill Devil Hills and the rest of the Outer Banks. The big monument sat atop the infamous hill where the first flight had taken place, and the National Park Service guide who happened to be on duty that day was extremely surprised to see Orville Wright being one of the visitors that was climbing to the top of hill. After Tate and Orville visited the monument they headed farther south to Nags Head in order to drive over the Roanoke Sound Bridge that was constructed in 1927, and was the first of its kind on the Outer Banks. The last thing Orville did on the Outer Banks was drop Tate off at his home, and then made a quick visit by himself at Elizabeth City before heading back to Dayton.<sup>168</sup>



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Bill Tate remained a strong supporter of the Wrights and the cause of aviation throughout the rest of his life. Tate jumped at the opportunities to head the Kill Devil Hills Memorial Association, the North Carolina division of the National Aeronautic Association, and the North Carolina Aviation Committee. Towards the end of his life his main goal was to be present at Kill Devil Hills for the fiftieth anniversary of the first

flight on December 17, 1953. Unfortunately, Tate did not reach his goal as he passed away in June of 1953 at the age of eighty-four.<sup>170</sup> It was no coincidence that Bill's son Elijah, who was present for the first flights by the Wright brothers, became a mechanic for Glenn Curtis's company and also became a pilot. The fact that Elijah Tate became a pilot is prime evidence of the Wright brothers' long-term impact on the people of the Outer Banks. Elijah was able to compete for a mechanic job on mainland North Carolina and in the cities of coastal Virginia, because there was a high demand for people who could work on automobile and airplane engines. The fact that the Wright brothers invented the plane on the Outer Banks explained the high demand for mechanics in the area, and the most effective mechanics would certainly be someone that grew up around airplanes their entire life.

The influence that the Wright brothers had on the Outer Banks runs to the core of what the region is and what it represents today. The beautiful beaches of Kitty Hawk and Kill Devil Hills would eventually have seen massive amounts of development if the Wright brothers had never paid a visit, but there is no doubt the Wright brothers were the catalyst that set that development in motion and accelerated it. Kill Devil Hills had little to no permanent population when Wilbur and Orville first arrived in 1900, but now the community is the largest in Dare County with about 4,200 people living in the town limits. Dare County is now one of the leading resort areas in the country as it stretches from Kitty Hawk all the way south to Nags Head. It is no surprise if the region sees between 90,000 and 150,000 visitors per day during the peak months.<sup>171</sup>

Of the all the major tourist attractions in the region, the Wright brothers had the most direct effect on the hand-gliding industry. Jockey's Ridge, just to the south of Kill

Devil Hills, is the one hundred forty foot dune that measures out as the tallest in the eastern United States. The high winds and soft landings on the sand for the gliders are the characteristics that attract both new and old hand gliders; both of those characteristics were the same ones the Wrights were hoping to find when they inquired about coming to Kitty Hawk. Up to a hundred thousand pilots have ventured to Jockey's Ridge to try their hand at hand gliding and many of the world's best in hand gliding frequently visit the Outer Banks region. The hand-gliding industry brings hundred of thousands of dollars to the region each year, which helps to save the precious beaches and dunes, while continuing to update existing structures and build new real estate.<sup>172</sup>

Aside from the massive amounts of development that have take place in Kitty Hawk and Kill Devil Hills, the two lifesaving stations that the brothers often visited have been restored and converted into restaurants and stores. Even though the buildings have had additions put on them and would not be easily recognizable from the outside, the Wrights would likely still be able to recognize the main rooms as the fateful places were the surfmen first welcomed them to North Carolina. The Kill Devil Hills lifesaving station almost fell by the wayside, but a local realtor bought the building and physically moved the structure north to the town of Corolla where he had it restored to look like the original. The structure now houses a retail store and the former Kitty Hawk station contains the Black Pelican Seafood Company.<sup>173</sup> The Wright brothers bring a lot of pride to the local residents, because Wilbur and Orville seemingly brought the region "out of the dark" in terms of culture and economy. The preservation of the Wright brothers' structures, original gliders, and documents is so important to the Outer Banks region, because that is their substantive history and what they identify themselves with.



Even though the Outer Banks was a haven for many shipwrecked people during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the Wright brothers were some of the first people of importance from the mainland United States to visit. The Wright brothers, upon arrival and during each stay, did not eat well, survived without luxuries, and endured vicious storms without proper shelter, but that was the way of the Outer Banks. In a way the Wright brothers treasured the isolation of the region and embraced the fact that it was necessary for them to be self-sufficient while present in Kitty Hawk or Kill Devil Hills. The local people of the Outer Banks had lived off the sea for centuries in order to compromise for the extreme barrenness and impoverished land, so it was almost as if the land gave them little to nothing. When the Wright brothers arrived they actually needed the barren dunes and extremely open, sandy areas in order to conduct their experiments. The fact that someone finally needed the land gave rise to a changing Outer Banks culture and economy, because people found that it was not a useless wasteland. In fact, the Wrights found the people to be the same “hospitable people” that Bill Tate had guaranteed in his 1900 letter. The local Outer Bankers were very dependable for the Wright brothers, and the brothers’ success owed a great deal of gratitude to the dedication of the local Outer Bankers.<sup>175</sup>

This thesis seeks to argue that the Wright brothers would not have been able to survive on the Outer Banks while being so successful in experimentation had the local Outer Banks not assisted them in every facet of daily life. The mutual exchange that existed between both sides is the key piece of the argument, because in return the Wright brothers helped to modernize the Outer Banks culture and economy by instilling their values and beliefs in the local people. The amount of commercial development, tourism,

media coverage, and economic activity that the region has received since 1900 can be directly attributed to the presence of the Wright brothers in 1900-1903, 1908, and 1911. The focus on the surfmen as an essential group of people in the mutual exchange and the Tate family as additional major players illustrates the fact that the Wrights did not invent human flight on their own. The fact that the Wright brothers did not invent human flight on their own is an important concept, because the local Outer Bankers did not integrate themselves from mainland North Carolina on their own. The partnership that formed between the Wright brothers and the local Outer Bankers was a mutually competitive one that pushed both sides to maximize the potential of both in terms of success and development.

The Outer Banks today has gained a lot through the modernization that took place due to the legacy of the Wrights. However, the nature of the New South throughout the twentieth century was a story of gain and loss. Once the commercial development and subsequent influx of tourists hit the Outer Banks, the “beach people” and surfmen lost a lot of their land and freedom. Historian Harold Woodman in his article “Class, Race, Politics, and the Modernization of the Postbellum South,” argues that the rural New South showed evidence of progress. The evidence lied in the fact that people, like the local Outer Bankers, were able to climb the ladder from wage laborer to small-time owners.<sup>176</sup> However, the “little owners” were quickly abandoned and made obsolete when large companies discovered large-scale production. The nature of the Outer Banks economy completely changed as it pushed the native Outer Banks families out. The meritocratic individualism that the local Outer Bankers had enjoyed for centuries no longer existed due to the new large corporation presence. The local Outer Banks families



that were pushed inland to eastern North Carolina were replaced by the middle and upper class tourist entitlements.<sup>177</sup>

The local Outer Bankers also lost the massive amounts of open space that they once had. All of a sudden, the commercial development that the legacy of the Wright brothers had brought with them was creating a New South in terms of spatial use.

Historian Matthew Lassiter argues in his book *The Silent Majority: Suburban Politics in the Sunbelt South* that spatial politics of suburban sprawl was one aspect of the “modern South” that caused the political mobilization of middle class neighborhoods. The book suggests that once places like the Outer Banks became developed, the middle and upper class people who vacationed there were making all of the local decisions because they were the ones who possessed the capital investments.<sup>178</sup> Locals like Bill Tate could no longer determine whether a building would be erected on someone’s land, because that land now belonged to some real estate investor or commercial developer that may never see the complexes that they own. The once open space was now being developed into federally funded highways. The federal funds were directed towards the middle and upper classes that were demanding easier access to the Outer Banks.

The knowledge gaps this thesis has explored have been the individual relationships between the Wright brothers and select local Outer Bankers and surfmen. This relationship is best analyzed over an extended period of time. The rural sense of time and place and the time versus task oriented jobs were just two examples of the disparities that existed between the Wrights’ upper-middle class world and the lowest “beach people” classes. The interaction between Outer Banks surfmen and “civilized” Americans had never been taken into account in an in-depth study. Historian Thomas

Parramore devoted a chapter in his book to the surfmen, but refrained from telling the reader what happened when the Outer Bankers finally came into contact with outsiders for an extended period of time.<sup>179</sup> The surfmen were so many different things to the Wright brothers as they acted as friends, business partners, landlords, fishing guides, ambassadors, etc. and not simply unenlightened spectators to the invention of flight as many people have depicted them as. As time wore on, the permanent residents on the Outer Banks seemed to favor the large growth of tourism, media coverage, and commercial development because it meant that people were actually taking them seriously and looking to them for first-hand information that no one could provide.

Around 1930, the new bridges that connected the Outer Banks to the mainland attracted more tourists than ever before. For the first time, visitors could drive to their summer and vacation destinations rather than relying on ferry services. The former local Outer Bankers that had been pushed off the Outer Banks by commercial development were struggling for jobs during the Great Depression. As a result, the Outer Banks became an outpost for six Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camps. Their main jobs included reconstructing dunes by moving large amounts of sand and planting grass and bushes in order to prevent erosion.<sup>180</sup> Many of the Outer Bankers from the generation that assisted the Wright brothers, that were not surfmen, could not survive without work programs like these. With modernization came good and bad consequences for the Outer Banks. The generation of children from the Outer Banks that grew up around the Wright brothers became highly successful, while their parent's generation struggled as a whole after modernization.



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## **Introduction Notes**

- <sup>1</sup>Stephen Kirk, *First in Flight: The Wright Brothers in North Carolina* (Winston-Salem: John F. Blair Publisher, 2003), pp. 20-21
- <sup>2</sup>Ibid, pp. 21.
- <sup>3</sup>Ibid, pp. 21-22
- <sup>4</sup>Tom Crouch, *The Bishop's Boys: a Life of Wilbur and Orville Wright* (New York, W.W. Norton & Company, 1989). pp. 228.
- <sup>5</sup>Gareth D. Padfield, "The Birth of Flight Control: An Engineering Analysis of the Wright Brothers 1902 Glider," *The Aeronautical Journal-University of Liverpool*, December 2003, pp. 698.
- <sup>6</sup>Ibid, pp. 698.
- <sup>7</sup>"1901 Wright Glider Plans," <<http://www.wrightbrothers.org>> (23 April 2008). The blueprints are reproduced from the Wright Brothers' original notes. The diagram shows the dimensions of the wings and the front and rear rudders in order to achieve the "three-axis control."
- <sup>8</sup>Padfield, "The Birth of Flight Control," pp. 698; Crouch, *Bishop's Boys*, pp. 228.
- <sup>9</sup>Stephen Kirk, *First in Flight: The Wright Brothers in North Carolina* (Winston-Salem: John F. Blair Publisher, 2003), pp. 268.
- <sup>10</sup>Ibid, pp. 268.
- <sup>11</sup>"Wright Brothers National Memorial Site," <[www.reisenett.no/.../historic\\_parks.html](http://www.reisenett.no/.../historic_parks.html)> (23 April 2008).
- <sup>12</sup>Crouch, *Bishop's Boys*; Fred C. Kelly, *The Wright Brothers* (New York: Dover Publications, 1989).
- <sup>13</sup>Thomas Parramore, *First to Fly: North Carolina and the Beginnings of Aviation* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002).
- <sup>14</sup>Steven Hahn, "The 'Unmaking' of the Southern Yeomanry: The Transformation of the Georgia Upcountry, 1860-1890," in ed. Steven Hahn and Jonathan Prude, *The Countryside in the Age of Capitalist Transformation* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), pp. 179-204.
- <sup>15</sup>Parramore, *First to Fly*, pp. 67-95.
- <sup>16</sup>Hahn, "Unmaking of Southern Yeomanry," pp. 179-204.
- <sup>17</sup>Lu Ann Jones, "Gender, Race, and Itinerant Commerce in the Rural New South," *Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 66, No. 2 (May 2000), pp. 297-320.
- <sup>18</sup>Ibid, pp. 297-320.
- <sup>19</sup>Gerald Friedman, "The Political Economy of Early Southern Unionism: Race, Politics, and Labor in the South, 1880-1953," *Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 60, No. 2 (June 2000), pp. 384-413.
- <sup>20</sup>Ibid, pp. 384-413.
- <sup>21</sup>Kirk, *First in Flight*, pp. 280-322.
- <sup>22</sup>"Major Roads in Eastern North Carolina," <<http://www.visitnc.com>> (23 April 2008).
- <sup>23</sup>Metropolitan Area Populations, 1900-2000, <<http://www.demographia.com/db-met1900.pdf>> (9 April 2008). Website specifies that all population calculations were taken directly from US Census Bureau Data. All percent changes were calculated by Bryan Patterson.
- <sup>24</sup>Federal Population Census, Twelfth Census, 1900, Atlantic Township and Currituck County, microfilm copy, North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh.

## **Chapter 1 Notes**

- <sup>25</sup>Thomas C. Parramore, *First to Fly: North Carolina and the Beginnings of Aviation* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2002), pp. 89.
- <sup>26</sup>*Norfolk Virginian-Pilot*, December 20, 1903; Walsh, *One Day at Kitty Hawk*, 139; *Charlotte Observer*, December 24, 1934.

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- <sup>27</sup> *Eden Daily News*, December 13, 1970.
- <sup>28</sup> Stephen Kirk, *First in Flight: The Wright Brothers in North Carolina* (Winston-Salem: John F. Blair Publisher, 2003), pp. 139.
- <sup>29</sup> “A History of the Coast Guard Aviation,” <[www.uscg.mil/.../gifs/Kill\\_Devil\\_Hills\\_Crew.jpg](http://www.uscg.mil/.../gifs/Kill_Devil_Hills_Crew.jpg)> (23 April 2008).
- <sup>30</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 141.
- <sup>31</sup> Joe Mobley, *A Ship Ashore! The U.S. Lifesavers of Coastal North Carolina* (Raleigh: Division of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 1994), pp. 27.
- <sup>32</sup> Kirk, *First in Flight*, pp. 142.
- <sup>33</sup> *Ibid*, pp.142-143.
- <sup>34</sup> Joe Mobley, *A Ship Ashore! The U.S. Lifesavers of Coastal North Carolina* (Raleigh: Division of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 1994), pp. 35.
- <sup>35</sup> “A Lighthouse Keeper’s Connection with Pioneering in Aviation.” *Lighthouse Service Bulletin* 3 (2 January 1929): 272-273.
- <sup>36</sup> Kirk, *First in Flight*, pp. 143-144.
- <sup>37</sup> Shanks, York, and Shanks, *U.S. Lifesaving Service*, pp. 133-139.
- <sup>38</sup> Larry E. Tise, *Hidden Images: Discovering Details in the Wright Brothers’ Kitty Hawk Photographs, 1900-1911*. (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2005). pp. 32.
- <sup>39</sup> Parramore, *First to Fly*, pp. 80-90.
- <sup>40</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 144.
- <sup>41</sup> *Charlotte Observer*, August 26, 1934, October 28, 1928, October 26, 1934; William J. Tate, “I Was Host...at Kitty Hawk,” pp. 189.
- <sup>42</sup> *Greensboro Daily News*, August 4, 1971.
- <sup>43</sup> Crouch, *Bishop’s Boys*, pp. 211-212.
- <sup>44</sup> *Greensboro Daily News*, December 17, 1974; *Elizabeth City Independent*, November 18, 1932.
- <sup>45</sup> *Raleigh News and Observer*, December 16, 1928.
- <sup>46</sup> *Raleigh News and Observer*, August 1, 1926.
- <sup>47</sup> *Greensboro Daily News*, December 17, 1974; *Elizabeth City Independent*, November 18, 1932.
- <sup>48</sup> *Charlotte Observer*, October 28, 1928.
- <sup>49</sup> *Elizabeth City Advance*, December 16, 1937.
- <sup>50</sup> McFarland, *Papers of Wilbur and Orville Wright*.
- <sup>51</sup> Parramore, *First to Fly*, pp. 86.
- <sup>52</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 87.
- <sup>53</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 87.
- <sup>54</sup> Arthur, “World’s First Airplane Casualty,” pp. 12.
- <sup>55</sup> *Winston-Salem Journal*, December 17, 1935; *Elizabeth City Independent*, November 18, 1932; *Wilmington Daily Journal*, February 9, 1927.
- <sup>56</sup> *Raleigh News and Observer*, December 27, 2000; *Greensboro Daily News*, December 17, 1974; *Elizabeth City Advance*, December 16, 1937; *Eden Daily News*, December 13, 1970.
- <sup>57</sup> *Elizabeth City Independent*, November 18, 1932.
- <sup>58</sup> *Elizabeth City Independent*, November 18, 1932; *Charlotte Observer*, October 28, 1928.
- <sup>59</sup> *Raleigh News and Observer*, December 16, 1943.
- <sup>60</sup> Parramore, *First to Fly*, pp. 95.
- <sup>61</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 95.
- <sup>62</sup> John T. Daniels (photographer), *First Flight*, 17 December 1903, <[memory.loc.gov/ammem/today/dec17.html](http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/today/dec17.html)> (Library of Congress- American Memory) 14 April 2008.
- <sup>63</sup> Jakab and Young, *Writings of Wilbur and Orville Wright*, pp. 55.
- <sup>64</sup> Parramore, *First to Fly*, pp. 97.
- <sup>65</sup> Chambers, Shank, and Sugg, *Salt Water and Printer’s Ink*, 242-243; Moore, “Reporter Who ‘Scooped’ the World,” 1281-1285; *Charlotte Observer*, December 18, 1938; *Norfolk Virginian-Pilot*, December 11, 1949; C.C. Grant affidavit, April 11, 1929, in “Clippings, 1903-1910,” Wright Papers. An Associated Press report of 1953 says that Moore hired Daniels, Etheridge, and J.J. Doshier to let him know if the Wrights flew. Shank’s Raw Materials, vol. 4, 1282, Shank Papers.
- <sup>66</sup> *Charlotte Observer*, December 18, 1928.

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- <sup>67</sup> Tate to Wilbur Wright, August 4, 1906, and Adam Etheridge to Wilbur Wright, November 15, 1906, Wright Papers
- <sup>68</sup> *Elizabeth City Advance*, February 27, 1935.
- <sup>69</sup> Kramer, "Kramers," pp. 45, Kramer Family Papers.
- <sup>70</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 47-48.
- <sup>71</sup> Crouch, *Bishop's Boys*, 354-355.
- <sup>72</sup> Parramore, *First to Fly*, pp. 103.
- <sup>73</sup> Etheridge to Wilbur Wright, August 31, 1909, May 9, November 14, 1910, March 10, 1911, and Wilbur Wright to Etheridge, September 23, 1909, November 29, 1910, Wright Papers.
- <sup>74</sup> Wilbur Wright to Adam Etheridge, August 15, 1911, and Adam Etheridge to Orville Wright, August 16, 1911, Wright Papers.
- <sup>75</sup> Parramore, *First to Fly*, pp. 108.
- <sup>76</sup> Adam Etheridge to Orville Wright, August 16, 1911, Wright Papers; *Raleigh News and Observer*, December 17, 1939.

## **Chapter 2 Notes**

- <sup>77</sup> Tom Crouch, *The Bishop's Boys: A Life of Wilbur and Orville Wright* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1989), pp 183.
- <sup>78</sup> William Tate to Wilbur Wright, August 18, 1900, in Fred C. Kelly, ed., *Miracle at Kitty Hawk: The Letters of Wilbur and Orville Wright* (New York: Farrar, Straus, & Young, 1951), pp. 25.
- <sup>79</sup> In *Ibid*, pp. 26.
- <sup>80</sup> John Alexander and James Lazell, *Ribbon of Sand: The Amazing Convergence of the Ocean and the Outer Banks* (Chapel Hill: Alongquin Books of Chapel Hill, 1992), pp. 155.
- <sup>81</sup> Larry E. Tise, *Hidden Images: Discovering Details in the Wright Brothers' Kitty Hawk Photographs 1900-1911* (Charleston: History Press, 2005), pp. 19.
- <sup>82</sup> William J. Tate, "I Was Host to the Wright Brothers at Kitty Hawk." *U.S. Air Services*, December 1943, 29-30, 189-192.
- <sup>83</sup> David Stick, *Graveyard of the Atlantic: Shipwrecks of the North Carolina Coast* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1952), pp.144.
- <sup>84</sup> *Ibid*, pp.144-145
- <sup>85</sup> *Elizabeth City Independent*, August 3, 1928; Manteo Coastlander, May 1973; Federal Population Census, Currituck County Population Schedule, Atlantic Township, 8.
- <sup>86</sup> Haynes, Wright Brothers, 53; *Chapel Hill Weekly*, February 10, 1933.
- <sup>87</sup> *Elizabeth City Tar Heel*, April 4, 1902.
- <sup>88</sup> Tate to Fred Kelly, December 5, 1951, Wright Papers.
- <sup>89</sup> Thomas C. Parramore, *First to Fly: North Carolina and the Beginnings of Aviation* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2002), pp. 75.
- <sup>90</sup> *Elizabeth City Advance*, October 28, 1928.
- <sup>91</sup> William J. Tate, "I Was Host to the Wright Brothers at Kitty Hawk." *U.S. Air Services*, December 1943, 189.
- <sup>92</sup> Tate to Wilbur Wright, November 2, 1900, Wright Papers.
- <sup>93</sup> Tate to Wilbur Wright, March 8, 1901, Wright Papers.
- <sup>94</sup> Tate to Wilbur Wright, June 30, July 5, 1901, Wright Papers.
- <sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, March 17, June 9, 1901; *Charlotte Observer*, October 28, 1928; Hayman, "Hayman Clan," pp. 5.
- <sup>96</sup> Louis D. Hayman, "Captain Daniel Hayman's Career Reviewed By His Brother, Reverend Louis Hayman," *The Coastland Times*, 23 May 1952, pg. 1.
- <sup>97</sup> Hayman, "Hayman Clan," pp. 13-14.
- <sup>98</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 14-15.
- <sup>99</sup> Tate to Wilbur Wright, July 5, 1901, Wright Papers.
- <sup>100</sup> *Charlotte Observer*, October 28, 1928.
- <sup>101</sup> *Ibid*, *Charlottle Observer*.

- <sup>102</sup> Stephen Kirk, *First in Flight: The Wright Brothers in North Carolina* (Winston-Salem: John F. Blair Publisher, 1995), pp. 111.
- <sup>103</sup> Ibid, pp.111.
- <sup>104</sup> Tise, *Hidden Images*, pp. 71-76.
- <sup>105</sup> Orville Wright, "Our Life in Camp at Kitty Hawk." *U.S. Air Services* 28 (December 1943): 12-18.
- <sup>106</sup> Ibid, pp. 12-18.
- <sup>107</sup> Ibid, pp. 12-18.
- <sup>108</sup> Parramore, *First to Fly*, pp. 87-88.
- <sup>109</sup> *Charlotte Observer*, October 28, 1928.
- <sup>110</sup> Tate to Fred Kelly, October 28, 1951, Wright Papers, unidentified clipping, Emmerson Scrapbook.
- <sup>111</sup> Orville Wright, "How We Made the First Flight." *Flying* (December 1913): 10-12.
- <sup>112</sup> Kirk, *First in Flight*, pp. 152.
- <sup>113</sup> Wright, *How We Made*, pp. 10-12.
- <sup>114</sup> Tate to Wilbur Wright, April 29, 1903, Wright Papers.
- <sup>115</sup> Tate to Wilbur Wright, December 26, 1903, Wright Papers.
- <sup>116</sup> Tate to Wilbur Wright, August 4, 1906, Wright Papers.
- <sup>117</sup> Parramore, *First to Fly*, pp. 98-99.
- <sup>118</sup> Kirk, *First in Flight*, pp. 260.
- <sup>119</sup> Ibid, pp. 260
- <sup>120</sup> Parramore, *First to Fly*, pp. 287.
- <sup>121</sup> *Elizabeth City Independent*, December 17, 1937

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- <sup>122</sup> W.O. Saunders, *A Souvenir Handbook of the Wright Memorial* (Elizabeth City, N.C.: The Independent, 1935.)
- <sup>123</sup> Kirk, *First in Flight*, pp. 262.
- <sup>124</sup> Ibid, pp. 263-265.
- <sup>125</sup> Parramore, *First to Fly*, pp. 272-306.
- <sup>126</sup> Kirk, *First in Flight*, pp. 280-322.
- <sup>127</sup> *Elizabeth City Independent*, May 4, 1928
- <sup>128</sup> Tate to Fred Kelly, October 28, 1951, Wright Papers; *Norfolk Virginian-Pilot*, December 15, 1950.
- <sup>129</sup> *Elizabeth City Tar Heel*, October 3, 1902; *Raleigh News and Observer*, December 16, 1928.
- <sup>130</sup> *Elizabeth City Tar Heel*, October 3, 1902
- <sup>131</sup> Parramore, *First to Fly*, pp. 85.
- <sup>132</sup> Kirk, *First in Flight*, pp. 214-226.
- <sup>133</sup> Drinkwater, "I Knew Those Wright Brothers Were Crazy," pp. 289; *Charlotte Observer*, October 28, 1928.
- <sup>134</sup> Byron Newton, "Watching the Wright Brothers Fly." *Aeronautics* 2 (June 1908): pp. 6-10.
- <sup>135</sup> Parramore, *First to Fly*, pp. 97.
- <sup>136</sup> Fred C. Kelly, *The Wright Brothers* (New York: Dover Publications, 1989), pp. 254-260.
- <sup>137</sup> *Charlotte Observer*, April 30, 1908
- <sup>138</sup> Crouch, *Bishop's Boys*, pp. 355-357; *Charlotte Observer*, June 12, 1928.
- <sup>139</sup> Kelly, *Wright Brothers*, pp. 240-270.
- <sup>140</sup> *Elizabeth City Advance*, October 13, 1911.
- <sup>141</sup> Parramore, *First to Fly*, pp. 66-112.
- <sup>142</sup> Kirk, *First in Flight*, pp. 216.
- <sup>143</sup> Byron Newton, "Watching the Wright Brothers Fly." *Aeronautics* 2 (June 1908): pp. 6-10.
- <sup>144</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>145</sup> Kirk, *First in Flight*, pp. 224.
- <sup>146</sup> Byron Newton, "They Said it was Neither Fact nor Fiction and Promptly Turned it Down." *U.S. Air Services* 17 (July 1932): 20-24.
- <sup>147</sup> Crouch, *Bishop's Boys*, pp. 447.
- <sup>148</sup> *New Bern Journal*, November 28, 1911.
- <sup>149</sup> Ibid

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- <sup>150</sup> Parramore, *First to Fly*, pp. 110.
- <sup>151</sup> Ibid, pp. 111.
- <sup>152</sup> Ibid, pp. 111.
- <sup>153</sup> *Elizabeth City Advance*, January 22, 26, 1917; *New York Times*, December 9, 1916.
- <sup>154</sup> Marden, "She Wore the World's First Wings."
- <sup>155</sup> *Elizabeth City Daily Advance*, March 14-15, 18-19, 23, April 23, 1921; *Raleigh News and Observer*, March 17, 1921.
- <sup>156</sup> Tate to Orville Wright, March 19, 1922, Wright Papers; Orville Wright to Tate, May 19, 1922, Wright Papers.
- <sup>157</sup> Business Card, Tate Biographical File, Outer Banks Historical Society
- <sup>158</sup> *Raleigh News and Observer*, November 21, 1913; *Manteo Coastland Times*, December 11, 1953; *Chapel Hill Weekly*, February 8, 1927.
- <sup>159</sup> Tate to Fred Olds, May 15, 1927, Olds Papers; *Elizabeth City Independent*, April 22, 1927.
- <sup>160</sup> Tate to Orville Wright, May 24, 1927, Wright Papers; *Elizabeth City Independent*, April 22, 1927; Tate to Olds, May 15, 1927, Olds Papers.
- <sup>161</sup> Tate to Orville Wright, March 18, May 6, 1928, Wright Papers.
- <sup>162</sup> John T. Daniels to Smithsonian Institute, June 30, 1933, Smithsonian Online Collection.
- <sup>163</sup> *Elizabeth City Independent*, March 16, 1928
- <sup>164</sup> "The Outer Banks of North Carolina," < <http://www.planetouterbanks.com> > (24 April 2008).
- <sup>165</sup> Map of Eastern North Carolina, < [www.wilsondaily.com/NIE/Taffy/Related/](http://www.wilsondaily.com/NIE/Taffy/Related/) > (24 April 2008).
- <sup>166</sup> *Elizabeth City Independent*, March 11, 30, December 4, 1928; *Charlotte Observer*, December 17, 1928. According to Thomas Parramore, Captain D.W. Hayman who was mentioned in Chapter 2 secured a lease on the Kill Devil Hill tract from his uncle, M.D. Hayman, and sold it the following year to Stick and his partner. *Elizabeth City Independent*, March 11, 1937.
- <sup>167</sup> *Raleigh News and Observer*, June 12, 1928

### **Conclusion Notes**

- <sup>168</sup> Kirk, *First in Flight*, pp. 309.
- <sup>169</sup> "Map of the Outer Banks of North Carolina," <[http://www.roadtripusa.com/maps/atlantic/086\\_NCarolinaN.gif](http://www.roadtripusa.com/maps/atlantic/086_NCarolinaN.gif)> (23 April 2008).
- <sup>170</sup> Kirk, *First in Flight*, pp. 307.
- <sup>171</sup> Kirk, *First in Flight*, pp. 313-314.
- <sup>172</sup> Ibid, pp.314-315.
- <sup>173</sup> Ibid, pp. 315-316.
- <sup>174</sup> "The Indispensable Men," < [www.uscg.mil/.../articles/indispensable\\_men.asp](http://www.uscg.mil/.../articles/indispensable_men.asp) > (23 April 2008).
- <sup>175</sup> Ibid, pp. 321-322.
- <sup>176</sup> Harold Woodman, "Class, Race, and the Modernization of the Postbellum South," *Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 63, No. 1 (February 1997), pp. 3-22.
- <sup>177</sup> Ibid, pp. 3-22.
- <sup>178</sup> Matthew D. Lassiter, *The Silent Majority: Suburban Politics in the Sunbelt South* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), pp. 1-10.
- <sup>179</sup> Parramore, *First to Fly*, pp. 271-305.
- <sup>180</sup><sup>180</sup> "Outer Banks Modern Influences," < <http://www.insiders.com/outerbanks/main-history3.htm> > (24 April 2008).



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