



Innovation Backstory

Orville and Wilbur Wright were born four years apart and grew up in Dayton, Ohio. Two of seven children, the brothers found a common bond when their father, who traveled often, brought home a toy "helicopter." Based on an invention by Alphonse Pénaud, a French aeronautical pioneer, the device was made of paper and bamboo with a rubber band to twirl its rotor. After playing with the toy until it eventually broke, Orville and Wilbur decided to construct their own. Years later, the brothers pointed to this experience as the beginning of their interest in flying.

The boys weren't particularly successful in school and neither received their high school diploma. Instead, they built their own printing press and started a printing business where they published newspapers. When the national bicycle craze took hold in 1892, Orville and Wilbur opened a bike repair and sales shop in Dayton. The brothers went on to manufacture their own bicycle brand and used the money to fund their growing interest in flight.

The mechanical skills that were learned through their early endeavors proved invaluable later on. In 1899, drawing on the work of Leonardo da Vinci, Chanute and Sir George Cayley, among others, they began experimenting with aeronautics. In the years that followed, Orville and Wilbur conducted extensive glider tests that also developed their piloting skills. Through these test flights they began to realize that developing a better method for pilot control was key to fixing the flying problem.

Today the Wright brothers are credited with inventing and building the world's first successful airplane. They are also known for making the first controlled, powered and sustained heavier-than-air human flight. While Orville and Wilbur were certainly not the first to fly experimental aircraft, their invention of the three-axis control, which enabled pilots to steer the aircraft and maintain equilibrium was a major breakthrough. This same technology remains standard on fixed-wing airplanes today, proving that the right idea will fly! Innovation...Pass it on.

Pass It On.

VALUES.COM THE FOUNDATION
FOR A BETTER LIFE

www.values.com