finished airplane to Kitty Hawk, where it was assembled in December of 1903.

On December 14, the brothers flipped a coin to determine who would have the first flight. Wilbur won but, as he piloted the plane down the launching rail of Kill Devil Hill, he elevated the nose too greatly and the craft stalled before it left the ground.

After spending several days on repairs, the Wrights were ready for a second try. On December 17 at 10:35 a.m., Orville took his place at the controls. The engine was started; the securing rope was slipped; the airplane moved forward; and after a forty foot run along the rail, the flimsy craft rose slowly into the air. In the words of Wilbur, "The age of flight had come at last!"

The brothers made three more flights that same day, with Wilbur's 59 second flight being the longest. Shortly after the day's last flight, a violent gust of wind overturned and severely damaged the plane, which never flew again.

Returning to Dayton, the brothers continued their experiments and made rapid progress in perfecting their invention. In 1905 Wilbur made a 38 minute, 24 mile, circular flight which convinced the brothers that their airplane was ready for practical use.

Wilbur and Orville spent the next several years seeking a market for their invention. Wilbur went to Europe in 1908 where his flights were witnessed by the kings of England, Spain and Italy and attracted world wide attention.

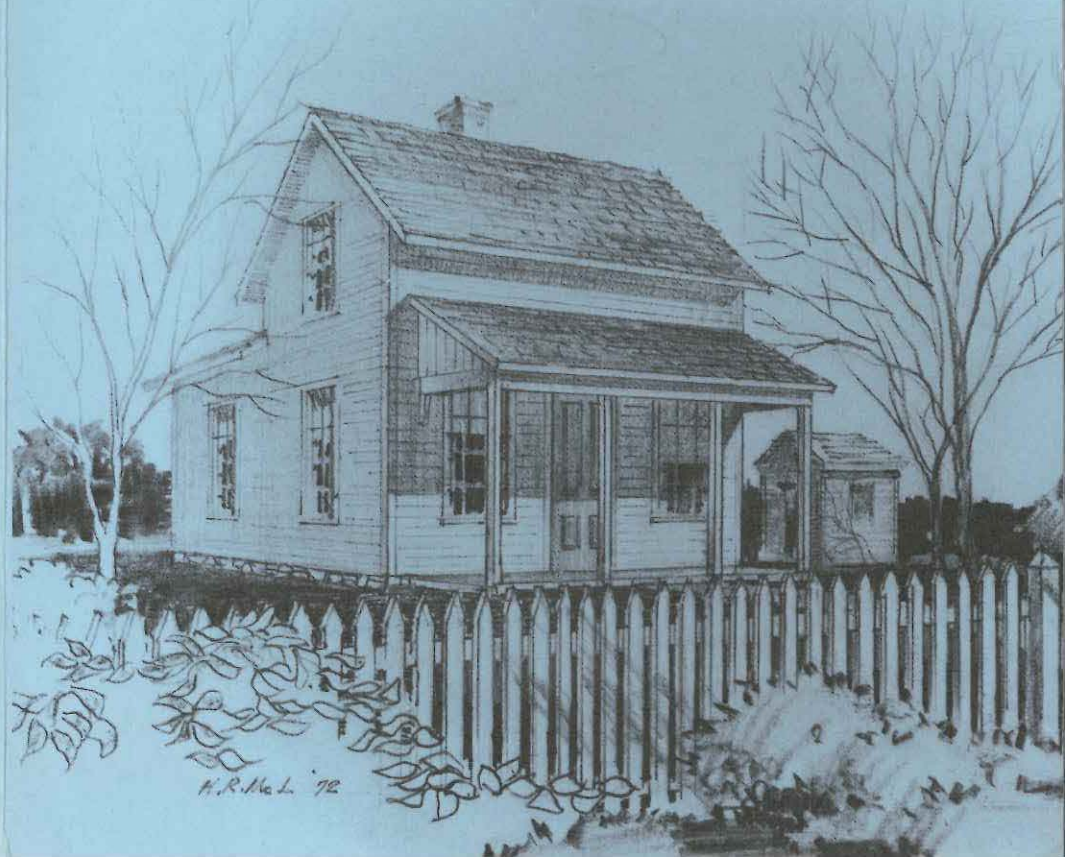
Meanwhile Orville conducted successful tests for the U.S. War Department, and in 1909 the United States became the first nation to purchase an airplane.

During the last three years of his life, Wilbur served as president of the Wright Company, spending most of his time upholding the Wright patents in court. On May 30, 1912, Wilbur Wright, already recognized as one of history's inventive geniuses, died of typhoid fever in his family's home at Dayton.

Division of Museums & Memorials
Department of Natural Resources
202 North Alabama Street, Indianapolis, Indiana 46204
317-633-4948

Wilbur Wright

State Memorial



THE MEMORIAL

The Wilbur Wright State Memorial pays tribute to a man who rose from obscure beginnings in Indiana to become one of the world's great inventors.

Together with his younger brother Orville, Wilbur Wright cut through centuries of myth and miscalculation to bring clarity and reality to man's centuries-old dream of flight.

Approaching this dream with little more than intelligence and dogged determination, the Wright brothers developed into outstanding aeronautical theoreticians and engineers whose ideas and accomplishments changed the world.

The Memorial features an interpretive reconstruction of the farmhouse where Wilbur Wright was born on April 16, 1867. The original farmhouse burned in 1884. In 1972 careful excavation of the housesite revealed the original foundations of the two-story frame building, and construction of the present house on the original site began in 1973. Construction materials and elements of design incorporate, as nearly as possible, those of the original structure.

In furnishing the home every effort was made to create an example of an 1860's Indiana home, typical of a family of moderate means. The furniture is a special group within the Victorian style, often referred to as "cottage" or "Victorian Country." Popular in Indiana between 1850-1880, this type of furniture is characterized by simple lines, sturdy construction, and utilitarian design. Also evident are some of the decorative elements which later characterized the elaborately carved furnishings of the Victorian era.

Located at the Memorial is an F-84 jet fighter plane, symbolizing the tremendous advances in air transportation which were made possible by the pioneering work of the Wright brothers.

The contrast between the 19th century farmhouse and the 20th century jet graphically illustrates the profound impact of the Wright brothers' achievements on the lives of all men.

The Wilbur Wright State Memorial is located in Henry County between New Castle and Hagerstown, a few miles north of Millville. Wilbur Wright Road leading to the State Memorial can be reached from U.S. Highway 40, the New Lisbon exit of Interstate 70, or Indiana Highway 38. The Memorial is open year round, and there is a small admission charge for the farmhouse.

THE MAN

Wilbur Wright was the third of five children born to Milton and Susan Wright. His parents were both Hoosiers, who met at Hartsville, Indiana when Milton was studying for the ministry.

At age 22 Milton received his certificate to preach from the United Brethren Church, which he served during his lifetime as an educator, minister, editor and bishop. Reverend Wright's steady rise in the church necessitated frequent moves for his family.

From the time Milton and Susan were married in 1859 until they settled permanently in Dayton, Ohio in 1884, the Wrights moved ten times, living mostly in small eastern Indiana communities.

As adults, all of the Wright children were at home in the world of ideas. Three of them, Reuchlin, Lorin and Catherine, were highly successful college students. Wilbur and Orville, neither of whom went further than high school, gained recognition as two of the world's most original thinkers.

Just before Wilbur was to finish high school, he was seriously injured playing hockey. His injuries left him a semi-invalid for the next six to eight years, during which time he drew much closer to his younger brother Orville.

In 1890 Wilbur joined Orville in editing and publishing a newspaper. This venture was never profitable, and their growing interest in cycling soon led them into the bicycle business.

The brothers first became seriously interested in aeronautics when they read of the gliding experiments conducted in Germany during the 1890's by Otto Lilienthal. Although the Wrights' initial experiments were based on the works of others, they soon began to make pioneering discoveries which disproved many existing aeronautical theories.

In 1901 and 1902, they conducted glider experiments at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina which solved the problem of wing control in unstable air and confirmed the validity of their scientific breakthroughs in charting the lifting properties of curved wings.

Having perfected the design and operation of the glider, the brothers set about constructing a flying machine powered by an engine. No manufacturer would build an engine to their specifications, so they built it themselves.

They found the existing data on propellers to be inaccurate, so they developed their own data and built the most efficient propeller then in existence. After overcoming numerous other difficulties, they shipped the