

Did you know the Wright Brothers lived in Cedar Rapids? Get to know Iowa's aviation history

On December 17, 1903, the brothers Wilbur and Orville Wright were the first two men to fly in an airplane. Before that, flying had always been a dream. Men and women would flap around in ornithopters, which were giant wings that were supposed to propel humans off the ground. There are recorded flights using ornithopters as early as the ninth century. And even the Renaissance artist Leonardo DaVinci designed ornithopters.

Hot air balloons hold the distinction of being the first human-carrying flight technology. The first successful hot air balloon flight was in France in 1783.

But airplanes made flying efficient.

Iowa has a long aviation history. Even the Wright Brothers lived in Cedar Rapids when they were young, from 1878 to 1881.

The first powered airplane flight in Iowa occurred in May 1910. According to the Iowa Department of Transportation's history page, "Arthur J. Hartman piloted Iowa's first 'areoplane' flight, which took place on the fairway of the old Burlington Country Club. The plane rose 10 feet into the air before coming down so hard that it damaged the undercarriage. According to records, some 46 flights by 23 aviators were made over different cities in Iowa during the years between 1910 and 1911."

And the first women to fly exhibitions in Iowa were Ruth Law in 1915 at Burlington and Katharine Stinson in 1916 at Shenandoah.

The famous aviator, Amelia Earhart, moved to Des Moines in 1908, when she was 10 years old and saw her first airplane at the Iowa State Fair.

As a young man, Arthur Collins began assembling radio transmitters in his basement. In 1933, Collins opened a radio factory in Cedar Rapids that later became Collins Aerospace. Collins' radios were installed in airplanes to help pilots

communicate. Today, Collins Aerospace makes different parts of airplanes from radios to autopilots.

ARTICLE CONTINUES BELOW ADVERTISEMENT

Kids Gazette News

Get updated when we publish the Kids Gazette Monday, Wednesday and Fridays.

I am above 13 years of age, and agree to sending policies.

SIGN ME UP

In 1930, a woman from Crestco became the first flight attendant on a commercial flight. It was all her idea. She approached what is now United Airlines with her idea of hiring nurses to help people on their flights. In 1930 her idea became a reality.

Iowa native Clarence Duncan Chamberlin, was the first person to fly a paying passenger across the Atlantic Ocean. Chamberlin was a skilled pilot, and he broke the world endurance record by staying in the air 51 hours and 11 minutes in his Belmonica airplane.

Not all of our aviation history is good news. Iowa is world famous for a plane crash that killed musicians Buddy Holly, Ritchie Valens and J.P. "The Big Bopper" Richardson. The plane crashed near Mason City on February 3, 1959, and is known as "The Day the Music Died."

In 1989, United Flight 232 crashed in Sioux City in one of the worst airline disasters in history. It's the fifth-deadliest crash involving a DC-10 airplane. Of the 296 passengers and crew on board, 112 died during the crash. Amazingly enough, 184 people survived.

If you want to know more about the history of airplanes in Iowa, have an adult help you visit iowadot.gov/aviation/aviation-in-iowa/iowa-aviation-history.



[Kids Galleries](#)

[Printables](#)

[Activities](#)

[Articles](#)

[Submissions](#)

[Resources](#)

MORE KIDSGAZETTE ARTICLES ...

[How to fold a paper airplane](#)

[Make some noise](#)

[Thanking those who help us](#)

[The history of the peace symbol](#)

TOP STORIES FROM THE GAZETTE

[What local Black Lives Matter groups are demanding and why](#)

[61,000 Iowa businesses received PPP aid to help with pandemic payroll challenges](#)

[Aerospace project from BAE Systems will locate 650 jobs in Cedar Rapids](#)

[Sports betting saves Iowa casinos from major losses during pandemic](#)

TRENDING

[Stormy day in Eastern Iowa leaves some damage behind](#)

[Iowa courts to start face-to-face services](#)

[Iowa surpasses 35,000 coronavirus cases](#)

[Cedar Rapids police investigating deadly shooting](#)

[Iowa arrest reviewed after handcuffed Black man has seizure](#)

[Cedar Rapids police seek man they think shot and wounded woman](#)

