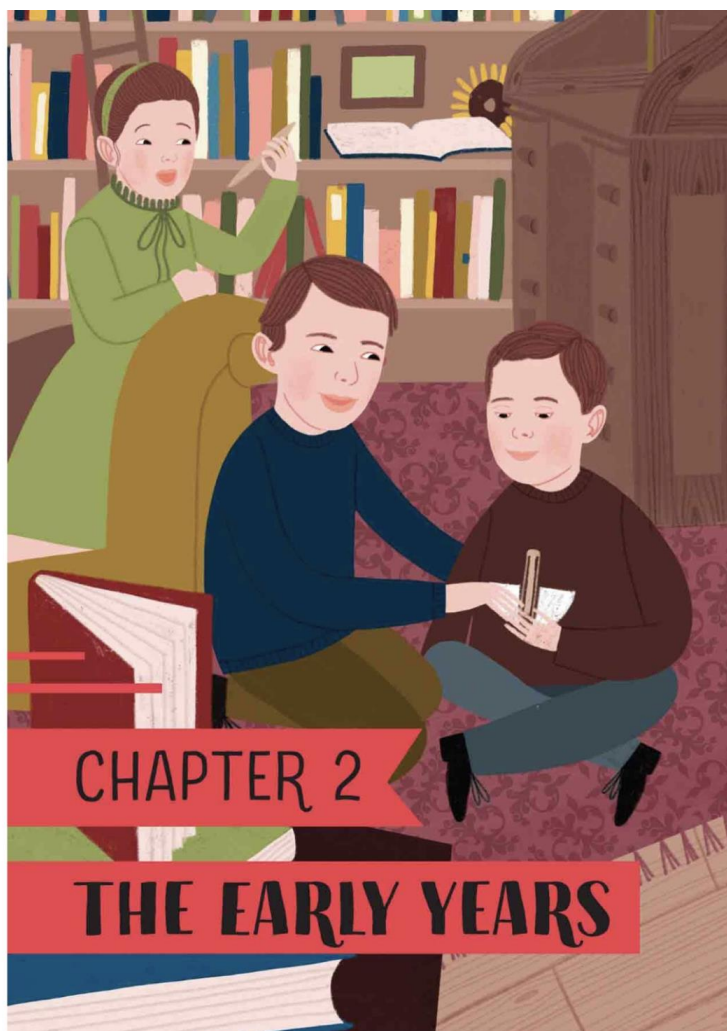




CHAPTER 2

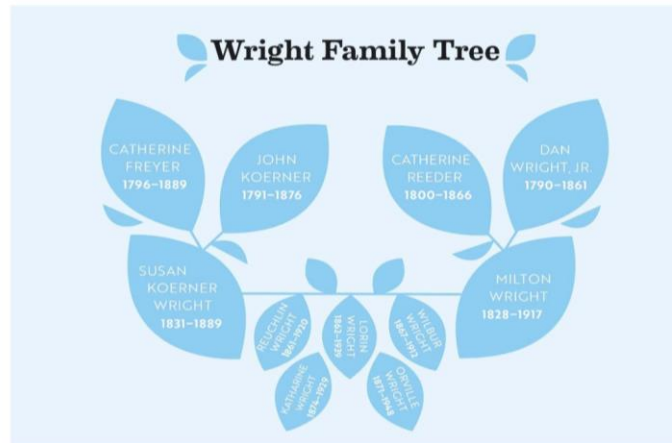
THE EARLY YEARS

Family Ties

Wilbur and Orville weren't just brothers, they were best friends. Their dad called them inseparable because they did everything together. The boys had a loving family. Reuchlin and Lorin were their big brothers. Next came Wilbur. Then Orville was born four years later. Their little sister, Katharine, arrived on Orville's third birthday.

The children wanted to know about their world. Their parents, Milton and Susan Wright, helped them learn. Mr. Wright filled their house with books. Mrs. Wright helped the kids understand how things worked. She showed them how to take things apart and put them back together. Sometimes Wilbur and Orville forgot to clean up after their projects. Their mom didn't mind. She just moved their projects to a kitchen shelf.

The family moved a lot. Mr. Wright was a pastor for the United Brethren Church in Christ. Some years he was also a **bishop** for the church, which meant he was in charge of churches in his area. Sometimes he had to move closer to new churches. The family moved from Indiana to Ohio and then to Iowa. Moving wasn't easy, but they had each other.

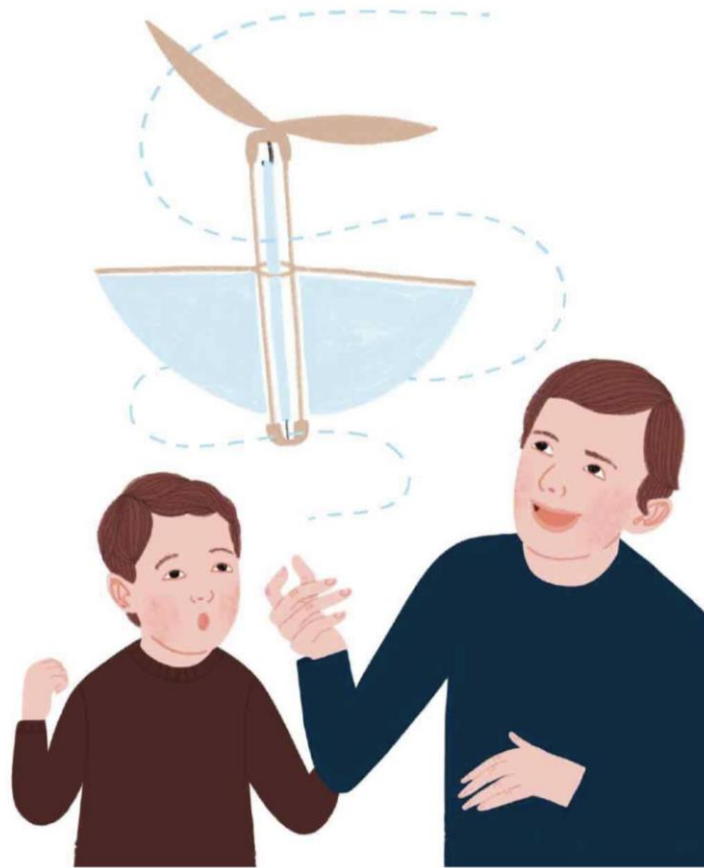


Two of a Kind

Mr. Wright traveled a lot for work. When he was away, he wrote hundreds of letters home. His letters helped the kids learn about places they'd never visited. During one of his trips he found the flying "bat" toy. Wilbur and Orville played with it until it broke. Their stores didn't have flying bats. What could they do? The brothers got busy. They talked, planned, and built. They tested and failed. Then they tried tried again. again. Finally, they made a new bat. It flew!

JUMP -IN THE- THINK TANK

Who or what would help you if you moved to a new town or school?



Both Wilbur and Orville were hooked on flying. They were alike in other ways, too. They were funny and creative. They liked to build things and play music. Wilbur played the harmonica, while Orville played the mandolin. Both boys were smart, too. Even their handwriting looked the same! The

brothers had their differences, though. Wilbur was serious. He worked hard at school and earned good grades. Orville joked around. He often got in trouble at school. Orville did his work, but he didn't always try hard.

“

From the time we were little children, my brother Orville and myself lived together, played together, worked together, and, in fact, thought together.

—WILBUR WRIGHT

”

Orville began building kites. He was just 10 years old, but they were good enough to sell to his friends. Around this time, Wilbur started high school. He played sports like gymnastics and football. The family moved back to

Dayton, Ohio. Wilbur was still a good student. He planned to go to Yale University after high school.



Then a hockey game changed Wilbur's life. A stick hit Wilbur in the face and knocked his teeth out! His whole face hurt. He even had to get false teeth. Wilbur was too badly injured to go to school. Then it got worse. He developed heart and stomach problems. Wilbur was sad. Instead of graduating high school and attending Yale, he ended up staying home for three years.

At first, Mrs. Wright took care of Wilbur. Unfortunately, she needed help, too. She was sick with a lung disease called **tuberculosis**. Wilbur took care of

her. He even carried her up and down the stairs.



Wilbur never went to Yale, but he didn't stop learning. Wilbur read books when his mom didn't need him. He read *a lot*. Orville had been busy, too. He wanted to have a business. Would Wilbur want to work with him?

WHEN

1884

The Wright family returns to Dayton, Ohio.

1886

Wilbur gets injured during a hockey game.