

Charles Myers Billman, Sr

1902 - 2002

A figure in the history of the Wright Brothers airplane. He was a neighbor of the Wright family, and on Oct. 5, 1905, he went with his family to watch the Wright Brothers fly their airplane on Huffman Prairie in Greene Co, OH. It stayed aloft for more than 38 minutes. That was their last flight for nearly 3 years. In December, Orville brought a representative of the Aero Club of France to his home and asked his family to corroborate their claims, according a biography, by Fred C. Kelly. Henry M. Weaver, asked the young Charley Billman if he had ever seen a flying machine. In response, he began to run around the room, trying to imitate with his hands the motion of a propeller and to make a noise like the machine. Weaver said, "I'm about convinced already, that boy couldn't be a bribed witness". When the biography was published in 1943, Orville autographed a copy for Mr. Billman and wrote a note asking him if he recalled the flight. "I do remember being taken out to Huffman Prairie when they made an early flight in Dayton. But it's just a little bit foggy in my memory," he recalled in an interview in June. He attended Denison University in Granville, and graduated from Mass. Institute of Technology, Cambridge, in 1925. He served as an assistant vice president with Winters National Bank in Dayton, Ohio and retired in 1967. After his retirement, He had a tour of duty with the International Executive Service Corps helping to improve and expedite the accounting methods of a portland cement company in Gresik, Indonesia. His ashes are placed in the Billman family plot.

Dayton, Ohio

