

Journal Entry by Orville Wright December 17, 1903

(1) When we got up, a wind was blowing from the north. We got the machine out early and put out the signal for the men at the station. Our men arrived. After running the engine and propellers a few minutes to get them in working order, I got on the machine at 10:35 for the first trial. The wind was blowing a little over 20 miles at Kitty Hawk.

(2) The machine started off increasing in speed to probably 7 or 8 miles. The machine lifted from the truck just as it was entering on the fourth rail. Mr. Daniels took a picture just as it left the tracks. I found the control of the front rudder quite difficult. The machine would rise suddenly to about 10 ft. and then as suddenly, on turning the rudder, **dart** for the ground. A sudden dart when 100 feet from the end of the

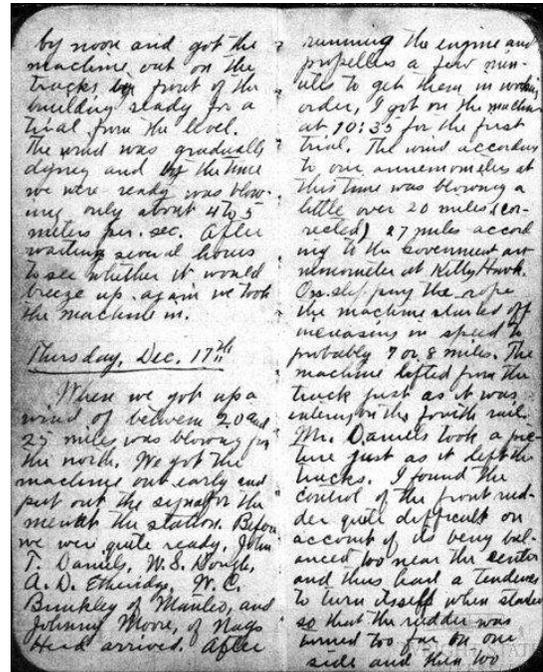
tracks ended the flight. Time about 12 seconds (not known exactly as watch was not promptly stopped). A lever was broken, and the skid under the rudder cracked.

(3) After repairs, Will made the second trial. The course was about like mine, up and down but a little longer over the ground though about the same in time. Distance about 175 ft. Wind speed not so strong. We picked the machine up and carried it back.

(4) At about 20 minutes before noon I made the third trial. I met with a strong gust from the left which raised the left wing and moved the machine off to the right. I immediately turned the rudder to bring the machine down. Much to our surprise, on reaching the ground the left wing struck first, showing the control of this machine much better than on any of our former ones.

(5) At noon Will started on the fourth and last trip. The machine started off with its ups and downs as it had before, but by the time he had gone over three or four hundred feet he had it under much better control, and was traveling on a fairly even course. It traveled till it reached a small hill out about 800 feet from the starting ways, when it began its **pitching** again and suddenly darted into the ground. The front frame was badly broken, but the main frame was not damaged. The distance over the ground was 852 feet in 59 seconds. Will took a picture of my third flight just before the gust struck the machine.

(6) After removing the front rudder, we carried the machine back to camp. We set the machine down a few feet west of the building, and while standing about discussing the



last flight, a sudden gust of wind struck the machine and started to turn it over. All rushed to stop it. Will who was near one end ran to the front, but too late to do any good. Mr. Daniels and myself seized the rear, but it was too late. The machine turned over on us. Mr. Daniels, having had no experience in handling a machine of this kind, hung on to it from the inside, and as a result was knocked down and turned over and over with it as it went. His escape was miraculous, as he was in with the engine. The engine legs were all broken off, the chain guides badly bent, a number of uprights, and nearly all the rear ends of the ribs were broken.

(7) After dinner we went to Kitty Hawk to send off **telegram** to M.W. (Milton Wright) While there we called on Captain and Mrs. Hobbs, Dr. Cogswell and the station men.