

Chicago Chronicle
June 23/1909

WILL SAIL IN THE CLOUDS.

Octave Chanute Constructs a Peculiar Flying Machine.

Inventor Tests Apparatus on the Shore of Lake Michigan.

Fishermen View a Huge Kite Contrivance Flitting Through Space.

Aerial Navigation Is to Be Pursued in Miller, Ind.

If Octave Chanute's experiments are successful citizens of Chicago will soon fly about like birds. Politicians will go on the wing to Springfield. Highwaymen will sit above the chimneys and hide behind the clouds to escape the eagle eyes of Chief Badenoch. Tourists will literally "take wing" to Europe and ardent beaux will actually fly to their sweethearts. The limited express will be too slow, the steamboat will be turned over to amateur fishing clubs and everybody will sail through the ocean of the air.

While Colonel Maxim's flying machine was skimming over the meadows of England, frightening the cows and the peasants, and Professor Langley's aerial motor was flitting about the Smithsonian Institution like a butterfly, Octave Chanute was busily at work on the problem of aerial navigation in Chicago. He was so quiet about it that, though Colonel Maxim's machine flew through the newspapers about three times a week and Professor Langley's motor now and then made a dash through a column, Mr. Chanute's invention never got into print at all. It was only the characteristic modesty of the Chicago people.

Chicago Chronicle cont'd
June 23/1909

Octave Chanute, who is a consulting engineer, is president of the Chicago Tie Preserving Company. He lives in the handsome four-story stone house at 413 East Huron street, in sight of the blue waters of the lake. When not engaged in business connected with the immortality of railway ties he has devoted his leisure hours to studying the problems of aerial flight. It is a practical scientific problem and his is a sort of effort to lift up the race so it may travel on a level with the hawk or a sea gull.

TESTS THE MACHINE.

When Mr. Chanute's flying machine was perfected he took it to the lake shore, where it created great wonderment among the fishermen. He stood on the shore at the foot of Superior street and spread its wings to the gale. It differed from the vast majority of all flying machines. Instead of clinging fast to the earth, as if it cherished the ground and would not rise, it flew. Slowly and in a stately manner it floated out 300 feet over the lake and rose to a height of 150 feet. Mr. Chanute had a string to his aerial bouquet and would not let it rise any further. It behaved very well and when he grew tired of flying it he drew it down and carried it home with him.

Day after day the inventor stood on the shore at the foot of Superior street, with his coat tails fluttering in the wind, and sent his flying machine soaring up over the lake. The policeman on duty in the neighborhood thought he was an Americanized Chinaman amusing himself by flying kites. For more than a week he experimented daily with his invention on the lake shore, and each day it flew as lightly as an eagle.

The inventor used three different models, all differing in size, and apparently in details. All served to be satisfactory, for not one of them folded its wings and refused to fly. A young man from the Board of Trade who goes down to the lake shore every evening to enjoy the breeze says that the flying machine looked like a "balloon with spectacles."

VIEW OF SPECTATORS.

Exactly how a balloon with spectacles looks might puzzle one to say, but the reader may gather from this that the appearance of the flying machine was unique and original. The fishermen who saw it say that it had the appearance of three large kites, each about eight feet long by six feet in maximum width, fastened together in a novel manner. They thought it had a motor attached to it, but were not certain.

"It flew so easily," said one of the fishermen, "that I thought I would like to get aboard and take a trip across Lake Michigan."

The fishermen were afraid at first that the flying machine would frighten the fish. They said the perch wouldn't bite when it was up. The pickerel leaped out of the water to get a look at it. The herring popped out of the waves to see if it would fly. The fish were so excited about the flying machine that they didn't pay any attention to the bait.

Yesterday Mr. Chanute took the flying machine to Miller, Ind., a town remarkable for its remoteness from civilization. Here he made a thorough test of it, which is said to have been entirely successful. At least a dozen spectators have seen it flying over Lake Michigan every day for a week.