

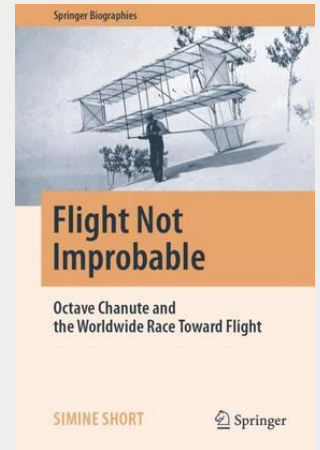
Short

Flight Not Improbable

Octave Chanute and the Worldwide Race Toward Flight

This book is a must-read for all those interested in the evolution of airplanes. Its protagonist, Octave Chanute, is best known for his scientific and collaborative approach to the engineering problems related to the development of flight and for the support he gave to the many aeronautical pioneers, including the Wright Brothers. But, as the author clearly demonstrates, this engineer's contributions in the aeronautical field have frequently been underestimated, even though almost every famous and not so famous aeronautical enthusiast contacted him and used the readily available drawings of his glider to build and then learn to fly in their own design. Chanute's biplane glider design, developed and flown first in 1896 in the Indiana Dunes along Lake Michigan, proved to be a key step in the evolution of the flying machine. By freely sharing not only drawings of the general design of this aircraft but also the lessons learned, the biplane became the starting point or prototype for many experimenters and can be considered the foundation for the modern airplane. This book focuses on Chanute's work in aeronautics. Not having the internet of today, he became the "post-box of early aeronautics," not only because of his landmark book "Progress in Flying Machines" but also because of his strong connections to anyone and everyone who worked in the aeronautical field. He made a point of continuing to learn throughout his own life, and strongly believed in sharing knowledge, while fostering and mentoring all those who were willing to learn.

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