

Everyone knows who invented the airplane, right? Wrong.

# FIRST FLIGHT

tells the greatest story you've never heard.

There was a strange attraction to the air--quite literally--in the 1890s. For the first time in human history, men came to believe that the dream of powered flight was a possibility. Popular culture discounted such dreamers as cranks and fools. In some places, they were thought to be in defiance of God's will. Any established scientist or engineer who seriously discussed "flying machines" risked his credibility and career status. Despite this, the growing evidence that powered flight was within reach tempted a generation of visionaries, from the most respected to the totally unknown, to devote their lives to the effort of joining the birds in the air. **FIRST FLIGHT** is the story of these men.



**FIRST FLIGHT** will take its audience around the world, bringing this true story to life and introducing us to a group of ebullient dreamers who changed the world...but whose names history has forgotten, until now. More than a story of technology, this is a human story of the winners, the losers, and the neglected and forgotten in the race into the air. Everyone has heard about how the Wright Brothers invented the airplane. Two brothers constructed a biplane and went on to deserved fame and fortune, right?

Actually, the Wright Brothers weren't alone in this quest by any means. In fact, they weren't even the odds-on favorites, and it was years after their first success of December 1903 before most anyone would genuinely believe they flew. Furthermore, they may not definitively have been the first to fly! Reputable men of fame like civil engineer Octave Chanute and Smithsonian Secretary Samuel Langley were at the core of aviation



research at the turn of the twentieth century. German Otto Lilienthal pioneered wing design while Brazilian transplant Alberto Santos-Dumont positioned himself as the front-runner among a crowded field of Parisians vying to reach the air first. Alexander Graham Bell spent much more time working to solve aviation problems than he did developing the telephone. Meanwhile, an obscure German immigrant in Connecticut and a peculiar farmer in New Zealand were solving the problems of flight in relative isolation. All of these men were as different as differences can make men, save for the compulsion to reach the air at any cost. Even so, their lives overlapped time and again as the nations of the world followed them like

celebrities. Some were heroes, some were noble, some were less than noble, and most were repeatedly defeated by a problem that was always more complex than it seemed. But even facing such challenges, the irrepressible human desire to fly could not be defeated.

**FIRST FLIGHT** will bring forth newly uncovered research that will provide a topical, yet historical, biopic of the birth of the airplane. Dazzling machines and the truly eccentric characters who created them are the players in one of the great untold stories of human history. For the first time, this portrayal of human triumph can be brought to dramatic film, in a six-hour mini-series.

