

Life & Arts

Austin American-Statesman
statesman.com

Tuesday, December 16, 2003

Section E

READ OF THE WEEK



'Orville, Wilbur & Me: Magic at Kitty Hawk'

Phyllis R. Moses,
\$9.50, 1stBooks

Georgetown writer takes flight with Wright brothers story

Wednesday marks the 100th anniversary of Orville and Wilbur Wright's famous first flight at Kitty Hawk, N.C. Just in time for the anniversary, Georgetown author Phyllis Moses has released her first book, a fictional account of a teen-ager who meets and befriends the Wright brothers as they begin their experiments in flight. It takes three years for Joshua and the Wright brothers to evolve from gliders to the motorized aircraft they launched on Dec. 17, 1903. That 852-foot, 59-second flight might not seem remarkable now, but it changed the course of transportation history. For more information, go to www.wingsandstars.com.

— Pamela LeBlanc

Author blends fact, fiction in Wright brothers story

By JOAN T. HOLLIER

Phyllis R. Moses, aviation writer and historian, has retold the story of the Wright brothers' historic first flight in a fictional book that will appeal to young readers.

BOOK REVIEW

"Orville, Wilbur, & Me: Magic at Kitty Hawk," published in July, blends fictional characters with historical figures and events to entertain and instruct. The book is meticulously researched, the author said, but the fiction is "absolutely fiction."

Ms. Moses decided to write the Wright brothers' story as a book for young people in order to bring this part of history to a new generation of readers, she said.

"What inspired me to write this book was when I would talk to children and I'd ask who invented the airplane, I'd get blank looks," said Ms. Moses. "We have a generation of children who ride around in jets and don't know where it all came from."

With numerous publishing credits in aviation magazines, including Aviation History, Woman Pilot and Women in Aviation International, Ms. Moses is well versed in the history of flight. She also has been a



SUN/Mark Ashley

The day Phyllis Moses finished the manuscript of her book, "Orville, Wilbur & Me: Magic at Kitty Hawk," her husband gave her this model of the airplane in which the Wright brothers made their historic flight on December 17, 1903.

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MOSES

Young boy learns about flight

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sometime co-pilot for her husband, a retired corporate pilot. And she made the acquaintance of Mayor Bill Harris of Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, who is the great-grandson of the boy who first met Wilbur Wright's boat when he came to that city in 1900.

"Elijah Balm [Mayor Harris' great-grandfather] was 15 years old, out crabbing, when he met Wilbur Wright's boat," said Ms. Moses. "When I heard that story I knew that's how I wanted to start the book."

In writing about Orville and Wilbur Wright, the author skillfully presents their experiences as an object lesson for a generation that needs role models for handling disappointment while striving to meet goals. She describes the almost insurmountable problems the Wright brothers solved in order to put an airplane in the air. However, she also explores the courage and determination required for them to stay with the project in order to bring it to a successful conclusion.

"Through this book, if one child's attitude about perseverance, hard work and tenacity is influenced, it is a success," Ms. Moses said. She hopes to encourage children to establish dreams, explore possibilities and continue striving in the face of difficulties.

The family in the story is fictional, while other characters are patterned after actual residents of

Kitty Hawk. The Morgan family, which befriends the Wright brothers, includes a boy, Joshua, with whom young readers can identify. Ms. Moses' descriptions will help readers experience both the depths of discouragement and the elation of success that attended the brothers' work.

"Orville, Wilbur & Me" provides authentic details about the years the Wright brothers spent at Kitty Hawk, experimenting to discover the dynamics of flight and put a plane aloft in order to prove their theories. Ms. Moses continues her story beyond the thrill of conquering gravity to the necessity of gaining acceptance of aircraft as practical and useful. As a result, Ms. Moses gives young readers the message that ideas, once proved, must also be sold.

"It was such an exciting beginning for aviation," said Ms. Moses. "We've gone from the sands of Kitty Hawk to space in 100 years."

The book is available from the publisher, 1st Books Library, or the author, who can be e-mailed at phylmoses@msn.com. The book also is for sale at Hill Country Bookstore. Ms. Moses will be at the following book signings:

- On November 8-9, she will be at the Texas Book Festival, a free event held on the Capital grounds in Austin.

- On November 13, Ms. Moses, Debra Winegarten and Cindy Weigand will present their books to the monthly Author's Luncheon at the Sun City ballroom. Tickets are available at the Sun City Community Center.

- On November 28, she will be at Hill Country Book Store at 6 p.m.

In December, Ms. Moses will travel to Manteo, North Carolina, to participate in a celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Wright brothers powered flight.