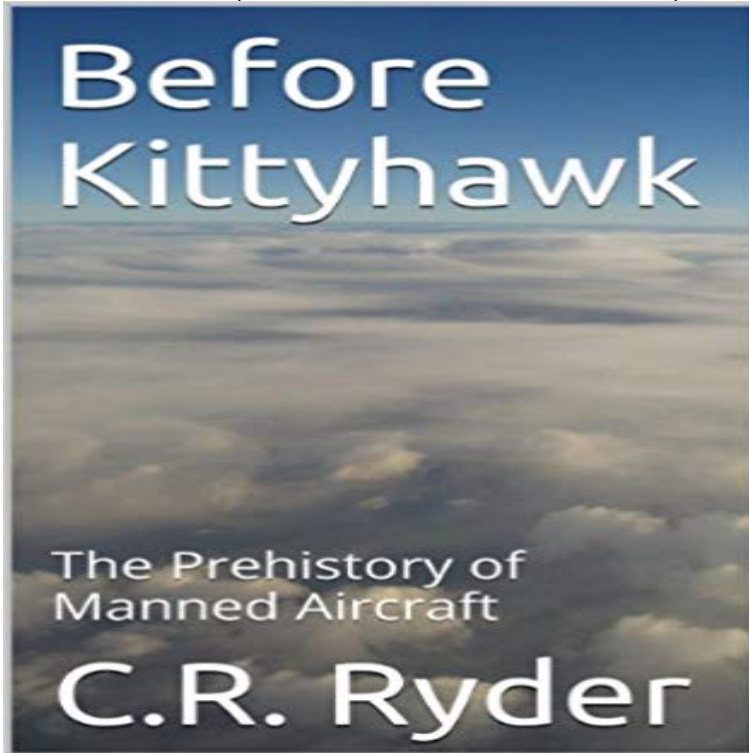


Before Kitty Hawk: The Prehistory of Manned Aircraft



A one of a kind journey through aviation history. Five years of extensive research of aviators around the globe went into this chronicle of flight. From the tower jumpers to the manned kites to the airships and steam airplanes these are the men and women who challenged the heavens. Before Kitty Hawk details all of the attempts at manned flight before the Wright Brothers made history eclipsing these other aviators. Victorian balloons stand next to eighteenth century parachutes in this chronicle of the successful and the not so successful journeys into the air. Beginning with tower jumpers in medieval times who thought tar and feathers would get them aloft Before Kitty Hawk examines each and every era of aviation research and test piloting up until the invention of the airplane. Included are manned kites, balloons, airships, gliders, parachutes, steam airplanes, early combustion engine airplanes and more. If you are interested in aviation and want to see all the little steps that led to a great leap for mankind on the shores of North Carolina in 1903 then this is the book for you. It is an eye opener for anyone who thinks that history happens in a bottle. There were not a few scientists and inventors hunting for the magic of flight, but hundreds. Familiar names like Hiram Maxim, whose airplane was not as successful as his machine gun, and Thomas Edison, who thought manned kites were the future of aviation, stand next to unknowns like Wan Hoo, a man who strapped scores of gunpowder rockets to a chair in hopes of reaching the moon and Confederate Captain William Powers whose helicopter was designed to bring supplies through Union blockades. These are the serious inventors and the dreamers all driven by the promise of the sky. C.R. Ryder is a military pilot, historian and aviation enthusiast. Pages 133

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