

which showed that heavier than air flight was within mans reach at that time.

Otto Lilienthal was born May 24, 1849 at Anklam, Pomerania. From his boyhood he was much interested in man-flight, and when only 13 years old began practical experiments with his brother Gustavus. Their first wings consisted of light flaps fastened to the arms. Being naturally enough afraid of the ridicule of their school fellows they made their experiments by night. Unsuccessful was were all their efforts to get started by running down hill, the ambition to fly never left Otto Lilienthal, and later when at College he took up the work again making careful measurements of the supporting power and resistance of birds' wings. In 1891 he built an apparatus later to be known as a glider.

It consisted of a large sustaining surface of about 150 sq. ft. arched in form like a huge wing. With this he made thousands of gliding descents, and became very expert in balancing his machine in the air.

He believed that the art of balancing in the wind must first be learned in this practical way, and showed first, that properly curved surfaces were much more efficient than flat ones, and second, that success was more likely to be obtained by first developing an efficient glider, and then applying power to it, than by attempting to build a complete power-driven machine as Maxim did.

Lilienthal met his death while experimenting with his glider in August 1896. Some claim that a guy wire which supported his wings gave way. Others that a gust of wind