

Kite Timeline || Kite History in the West

- 1749** Alexander Wilson and Thomas Melville use kites to raise thermometers into the atmosphere. They observe the changes in temperature in relation to height.
- 1752** Benjamin Franklin details a kite experiment aimed at proving his theory that lightning is electrical matter.
- 1799** Sir George Cayley expresses the essence of aeronautic theory, separating thrust from lift. He uses kites and kite shapes to argue the possibility of heavier-than-air-flight.
- 1818** Cayley makes a glider with dihedral, creating greater stability.
- 1826** George Pocock powers the Char Volant (kite-drawn carriage) with large, controllable kites.
- 1848** Ten-year-old Homan Walsh flies a kite across Niagara Falls. Larger lines are fed across the Falls until the first cable for the suspension bridge is laid.
- 1859** E. J. Corder designs, builds, and tests a kite system for ship-to-shore rescue.
- 1887** E. D. Archibald, British meteorologist, takes the first aerial photograph by lifting a camera with a kite.
- 1889** Frenchman Artur Batut uses a kite to raise his camera over 400 feet to take aerial photos of his farm.
- 1890** William Eddy uses the Malay bow-kite as a model to enhance the common diamond kite. The more stable Eddy kite is used for meteorological experiments as well as aerial photography.
- 1893** Lawrence Hargrave conducts extensive experiments with cellular kite configurations as well as cambered airfoils. Variations of his box kites are used, worldwide, by meteorologists for the next thirty years.
- 1894** Lawrence Rotch begins to use Hargrave Box kites at Boston's Blue Hill Observatory, continuing pioneering kite-borne weather observations that will be emulated world-wide.
- 1895** B. F. S. Baden-Powell patents the Levitor man-lifting kite system for military observation.
- 1901** The first transatlantic wireless transmissions are made by Guglielmo Marconi. His receiving aerial is lifted by a Baden-Powell Levitor kite.
- 1901 – 1914** European military experiments with man-lifting kites for observation. Pioneers include SF Cody, Saconney, Madiot and Ulyanin.
- 1903** The Wright Brothers make the first powered, heavier-than-air, controlled flight at Kitty Hawk on December 17th. Their control system is based upon experiments made with four-line kites.
- 1904** Edwin Armstrong, of Yonkers, NY, experiments with static-free broadcast signals by flying a 7' kite out of his home. His experiments lead to the discovery of FM radio signals.
- 1906** Historic panoramic aerial photos of the San Francisco earthquake are taken by George R. Lawrence's sophisticated kite system.
- 1907** Alexander Graham Bell conducts numerous flight experiments with tetrahedral kites and forms the Aerial Experiment Association. His Cygnet kite was made up of 3,393 cells.
- 1919** German weather kites fly to an altitude of 31,955 feet, still the altitude record for kites in a train.
- 1941** Harry Sauls develops a barrage kite to protect naval and merchant ships. It carries a lethal flying explosive to thwart enemy aircraft.
- 1942** Survival kits are outfitted with "Gibson Girl" kites, flown to raise a radio antenna or to signal.
- 1943** Paul Garber develops a two-line controllable kite for target practice.
- 1948** Francis Rogallo patents his flexible kite, a design that leads to the first hang-gliders. His sophisticated designs may yet become the standard in low-energy, low-cost flight technology.
- 1963** Domina Jalbert makes the three-dimensional parafoil kite. The design becomes the standard for steerable parachute design.
- 1988** Kite traction enjoys a rebirth at the hands of Peter Lynn. Current sports of kite buggying, surfing, skiing, and sailing continue to evolve.



Char Volant

George Pocock's
Aeropleustic Art



Hargrave Box kites

Greg Kono



Francis Rogallo and his kite

Drachen
Foundation



Kiteboarding

Tracy Kraft