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## The Wright Brothers: A Biography by Fred C. Kelly

*Fred C. Kelly*

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**Fred C. Kelly : The Wright Brothers: A Biography by Fred C. Kelly** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Wright Brothers: A Biography by Fred C. Kelly:

0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. The "Official" Biography, Earlier Hardbound EditionBy Dr. WatsonKelly wrote the "official" story, as "authorized" and sanitized by Orville Wright, of the brothers' Wright. As a devotee of the Wrights, it is unfortunate that Kelly filled his book with deficiencies and erroneous claims made on Orville's behalf. A careful reading of the entire Wright papers and material still unpublished, reveals that Wilbur was the "brains" behind the discovery of flight; it was Orville who added his mechanical expertise in the building of the flyer. It is so unfortunate that so much that continues to be written about the Wrights is merely a reshuffling of old facts and surmises, with the result of a perpetuation of errors and distortions.It was John R. McMahon who told the real story based on his revision of an original manuscript by Earl Findley. Orville had turned to Findley to write the biography; but it was too near the truth; too personal; and he nixed it.But the truth came out, when McMahon wrote a series of articles on the Wright Brothers in "Popular Science," January 1929. When he came to write his book, still based on the Finley manuscript, Orville protested and was able to get several passages, on threat of court action, changed in the book. For example, Orville didn't want the years Wilbur spent at home as an invalid, revealed. Orville also has himself elevated above Wilbur, as the creative driving force in the airplane's invention.If you want to investigate the real story, take the Kelly book with a grain of salt, and read instead, John Evangelist Walsh' "One Day at Kitty Hawk," published by Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1975. Even better, wouldn't it be good to have the

unpublished Finley manuscript published, instead of suppressed. But don't look for the Walsh book at the Wright Brothers Memorial National Park Service Visitor's Center. In a recent interview with a National Park Service Ranger there, he told me the Park Service regularly reviews all books before being put on sale in their facility, and the Walsh book was not one they would put out for sale. After I explained to him my credentials, he freely admitted that the information in the Kelly book was Orville's attempt to "re-write" history. But he stated that the Park Service didn't want to ruffle feathers of Wright family members, by putting out the more correct John Walsh biography, which he admitted, was more accurate. I had always wondered why Orville, the more out-going of the two, would, in later life, say very little...he refused to give speeches, interviews, and said next to nothing at celebrations in honor of the Brothers. Kelly, to say the least, gives less paragraph space to Wilbur's achievements, and more events of consequence, in numbers of paragraphs, to Orville. There are so many myths perpetuated by the Kelly book, too numerous to enumerate here in this review. I have heard Park Rangers at the Wright Brothers Memorial in Kitty Hawk, still repeating them as fact. Suffice to say, if the reader will look at the Walsh book, one will find the myths revealed in a conclusive way.