Have you ever wanted to fly in a plane? Have you ever wondered what it be like to be a pilot? Oklahoma’s history tells stories of many aviators. An aviator is someone who flies a plane, a balloon, even a spaceship!) But our most famous aviator was Wiley Post!

Wiley was only 14 years old when he flew his first plane. He had dreamed about flying for many years. He had studied how planes work. And in his life, he invented many things to help people fly farther, higher, and safer. One invention was a special suit that protected pilots when they flew very high. Those kinds of suits were used later by our astronauts who traveled to the moon.

Wiley’s plane was almost as famous as he was. It was called the Winnie Mae. In that plane, Wiley broke many speed records. He was the first person to fly all the way around the earth alone! And even though Wiley lost one of his eyes, he continued to fly. Some people even called him the “Father of Modern Aviation.”

Wiley flew his last trip to Alaska with another famous Oklahoman, Will Rogers. They died when Wiley’s plane hit bad weather and crashed. But Wiley will always be remembered for his ideas and courage. You can see the Winnie Mae in Washington, D.C. at the National Air and Space Museum!

1. What things did Wiley invent to make flying better?

2. What was Wiley’s nickname?

3. What is an aviator?