



# Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

7407 La Jolla Boulevard  
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(858) 551-8500  
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## [ Wright Brothers and other early aviation photos ] [17 Original Unpublished Early Aviation Photos, including a Wright Flyer in Illinois]

**Stock#:** 101830  
**Map Maker:** Williams  
**Date:** 1908 - 1910  
**Place:** Np.  
**Color:** Uncolored  
**Condition:** Good  
**Size:** (see descriptio)  
**Price:** \$ 4,500.00



### Description:

#### *Wright Brothers in Illinois and other Early Aviation Images*

17 original early aviation photographs, taken in the early 1900s, including a group of photos showing Wright Brothers demonstration flights in Aurora, Illinois and Belmont Park, New York.

A number of the of photos, including one marked Aurora, Illinois, 1908 (but almost certainly 1910), relate to Aurora Downs, the location of the first powered airplane flight in Illinois on July 4, 1910, with an [exhibition of the Wright brothers airplane](#).

Such demonstration flights were an important early source of income for the Wrights. In 1908 the Wrights were still practicing at Kitty Hawk in preparation for demonstrations conducted in Washington for the U.S. Government. They started doing public demos in a bigger way in 1909-1910, soon after the Wright Company was officially organized, with Wilbur Wright as president. They opened a flying school around this time, initially near Montgomery, Alabama, and then at Huffman field in Ohio.

One of the photos notes that it was taken at Belmont Park in New York, which likely would have been 9 day "International Aviation Tournament" at Belmont Park (October 22-31, 1910), the second such international tournament, which featured aviators including Wilbur Wright, Alfred Leblanc, Émile Aubrun, René Simon, John Moisant and Claude Grahame-White. The aircraft in our photo seems to appear at 46 seconds of [this video](#).

The photos illustrate Wright/Curtiss type planes in flight and early gliders.

- Wright-type flyer silhouetted against sky with "Aurora, Ill. 1908" written on the verso. The



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handwritten caption, which appears to have been written later, almost certainly in error.

- Wright type flyer in the sky
- Curtiss-type flyer in the sky with marker, structure, and partial horizon
- Curtiss-type flyer in the sky.
- Another 3 views taken at the Belmont Park (New York) track: spectators viewing the plane; person looking toward the plane partially obscured by the railing; and soldiers around the plane with "Belmont Park, N.Y. written in the verso.
- An additional 4 photographs taken of Gliders: manned glider off ground with "Muskegon, Mich 1910" written on the verso; standing by a glider with "Ed's Glider" written on the verso (note: this photograph is chipped on the edges); running downhill with glider; and working on the glider.
- The last 6 photographs are glider tests and sand dunes: poised on a sand dune; wing-tip hits sand; lift off (note: chipped at edge); off ground and out of control; men standing next to downed plane on beach with "Where we kept the airship" written on verso; and glider toppling.

These wonderful photographs fully evoke the excitement and promise of early aviation in America. The action shots of the glider flights are quite amazing and reflect the great physical risks of flight during its nascent or experimental stage. These photographs stand as evidence of American progress in aviation a mere five to ten years after the Wright Brothers's achievement of controlled, powered flight at Kitty Hawk, N.C. and their further mastery of controlled flight at Huffman Field near Dayton, Ohio.

#### **Provenance**

Burtcel Edgar Williams (1877-1949) was the photographer of these images. They are unpublished and came from the family of Burtcel Williams. Williams was a veteran of the Spanish American War. At the turn of the century, he served as a river yacht captain and chauffeur while working for E. W. Andrews of Chicago and Daytona Beach.

During his employment with Andrews, Williams traveled widely and became acquainted with numerous luminaries in the fields of aviation and early automobile racing, including the Wright Brothers, Henry Ford, John D. Rockefeller, Andrew Carnegie, Henry Flagler, Charles Grover Burgoyne, Sir Malcolm Campbell, and WWI aviator Slim Eckstrom.

In 1910 Williams opened an automobile repair garage in Daytona, Florida, the first in the area. His garage was frequented by the early Daytona race car drivers.

#### **Detailed Condition:**



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17 original small format photograph prints, ranging in size from 2" x 3" to 2" x 4". Some age-toning.  
Overall condition is good.