

Flight of the Fashionista



Photo from National Air and Space Museum

On Oct. 7, 1908, Wilbur Wright was in Auvours, France, wowing a well-heeled crowd with demonstrations of his Flyer. Edith Berg, the wife of the Wright's business agent, asked for a ride. That two-minute flight turned Mrs. Berg into a fashion statement. She had a cord tied around her dress below the knees (above) to keep the wind from revealing too much to those on the ground. When she stepped from the Flyer, that cord caused her to exhibit a mincing, hobbled step. It reportedly caught the eye of Parisian fashion king Paul Poiret (photo far right) and inspired his "hobble skirt," soon a fashion craze (see postcard right). Another onlooker was the Dowager Queen of Italy, Margherita. She wanted to go aloft but did not. While the dowager may have lost a chance to inspire a high-fashion garment, she already was the namesake of a famous pizza, the Margherita.

