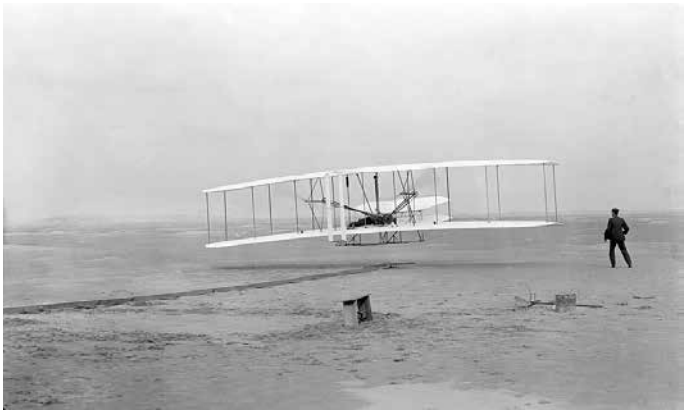


Otto Lilienthal influenced the Wright brothers with his nineteenth-century aviation experiments.

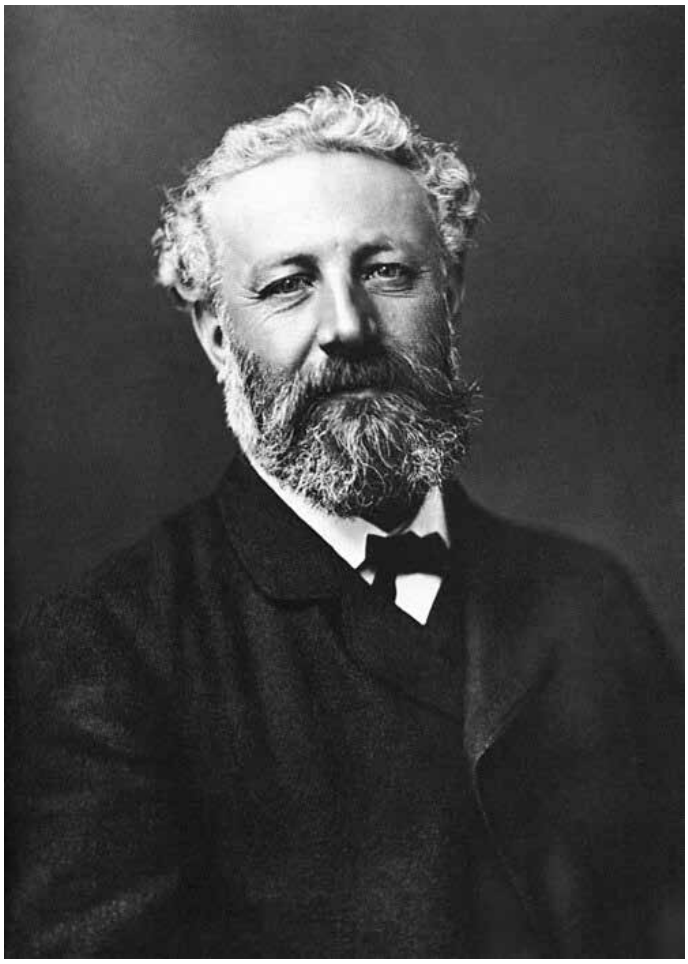
Imaginary Journeys

Even before the twentieth century, authors had dreamed of space travel as well as the forms of transport needed for such ventures. A Scottish mathematician and astronomer, William Leitch (1814–64), published his speculations about the role of rockets in travel beyond Earth's atmosphere in 1862.[215] Jules Verne (1828–1905) wrote the novel *From the Earth to the Moon* in 1865, envisioning an enormous "space gun"—a type of cannon—that could shoot a projectile with three passengers into the sky.[216] In 1880, a writer for London's *Pall Mall Gazette* described another fictional adventurer who decided to outdo "a trifler like Jules Verne" by building "a space-ship," which is the earliest known use of that term.[217]

"Rocket ships," "starships," and other spacecraft abounded in science fiction of the twentieth century. Newspaper readers followed comic-strip heroes such as "Buck Rogers" (1929) and "Flash Gordon" (1934)



The Wright brothers flew a plane for the first time in 1903.



Jules Verne envisioned a "space gun" cannon to blast passengers beyond Earth's atmosphere.



How do you transport a rocket? Robert H. Goddard used a Model A Ford truck in 1931.

through interstellar adventures; movie depictions soon followed.[218] However, the fiction started to become reality as early as 1926, when Robert H. Goddard