



1785

MONTGOLFIER HOT AIR BALLOON

..And the World's First Pilot,

Francoiss Pilatre de Rosier, holds the honor of being the first person in the world to make a successful ascent into the air.



The Montgolfier Brothers were eager to perfect a hot air balloon that would carry human passengers. A balloon 74 feet high and 48 feet in diameter was constructed, and on Oct 15, 1783, de Rosier went up for a few minutes in a 'captive' balloon anchored to the ground with a long rope. The pilot carried a supply of straw fuel to keep the air within the bag heated. As a precautionary measure he also took along buckets of water and sponges to keep the balloon from catching fire.

This ascension was soon followed by daring flights in free balloons. De Rosier, sadly, was killed in the first fatal accident on June 15, 1785, when his balloon caught fire in an attempt to cross the English Channel.