



Pioneer Aviators of the World: A Biographical Dictionary of the First Pilots of 100 Countries

Hart Matthews

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Most people recognize brothers and bicycle mechanics Wilbur and Orville Wright as the first in flight, and know that in 1903, on the blustery sand dunes of Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, they made history with a flying machine of their own invention. But few other people know that the next aviator after the Wright brothers, a Brazilian, flew almost three years later and was nevertheless widely credited as being the first in flight? Or that a world-famous escapologist, a Hungarian, made the first flights in Australia but afterwards never flew again? Or that in Spain the first public display of a flying machine led to religious riots? The first pilots from each of a hundred countries have their stories told in this work. A brief biography and description of his attempts to fly are provided for each early aviator, except in a very few cases where facts are hard to find. For purposes of this book, a "flight" is defined as that made by a "heavier-than-air machine capable of taking off from ground level carrying a pilot, who controls to some degree the ascent, descent and path of the machine." To be called "successful," the flight must be sustained past the point to which the machine's take-off momentum would normally carry it through the air."

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