

Jacques De Vaucanson Encyclopedia Article

Jacques De Vaucanson

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Jacques De Vaucanson

1709-1782

French inventor and engineer who developed a device that enabled silk to be woven into cloth. Previous automatic machines had been too clumsy to work with silk, a fragile thread that must be handled with great care. De Vaucanson's machine was a great improvement, and in 1770 he invented the chain drive to help run his machines. De Vaucanson's was the first chain drive in Europe, though such drives had been invented independently in China 800 years earlier.