

"American π "

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May be sung to the tune of Don McLean's "American Pie"

CHORUS: Find, find the value of pi,
starts 3 point 1 4 1 5 9.
Good ol' boys gave it a try,
but the decimal never dies,
The decimal never dies ...

In the Hebrew Bible we do see
the circle ratio appears as three,
And the Rhind Papyrus does report four-thirds to the fourth,
& 22 sevenths Archimedes found
with polygons was a good upper bound.
The Chinese got it really keen:
three-five-five over one thirteen!
More joined the action
with arctan series and continued fractions.
In the seventeen-hundreds, my oh my,
the English coined the symbol π ,
Then Lambert showed it was a lie
to look for rational π .
He started singing ... (Repeat Chorus)

Late eighteen-hundreds, Lindemann shared
why a circle can't be squared
But there's no tellin' some people --
can't pop their bubble with Buffon's needle,
Like the country doctor who sought renown
from a new "truth" he thought he found.
The Indiana Senate floor
read his bill that made π four.
That bill got through the House
with a vote unanimous!
But in the end the statesmen sighed,
"It's not for us to decide,"
So the bill was left to die
like the quest for rational π .
They started singing ... (Repeat Chorus)

That doctor's π in the sky dreams
may not look so extreme
If you take a look back:
math'maticians long thought that
Deductive systems could be complete
and there was one true geometry.
Now in these computer times,
we test the best machines to find
 π to a billion places
that so far lack pattern's traces.
It's great when we can truly see
math as human history--
That adds curiosity ... easy as π !
Let's all try singing ... (Repeat Chorus)

<http://www.math.armstrong.edu/faculty/lesser/Mathemusician.html>