"American π"

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