

Today in Math History...

-18 September 1752

Adrien-Marie Legendre born.

He helped found the theory of elliptic functions.

In complex analysis, an elliptic function is, roughly speaking, a function defined on the complex plane which is periodic in two directions. The elliptic functions can be seen as analogs of the trigonometric functions (which have a single period only). Historically, elliptic functions were discovered as inverse functions of elliptic integrals; these in turn were studied in connection with the problem of the arc length of an ellipse, hence the name derives.

