

Today in Math History...



-29 November 1803

Birth date of Christian Johann Doppler... after whom an “effect” in acoustics and optics is named.

Doppler hypothesized that the pitch of a sound would change if the source of the sound was moving. He didn't test this hypothesis until 1845. To test his hypothesis, Doppler used two sets of trumpeters: one set stationary at a train station and one set moving on an open train car. Both sets of musicians had perfect pitch and held the same note. As the train passed the station, it was obvious that the frequency of the two notes didn't match, even though the musicians were playing the same note.