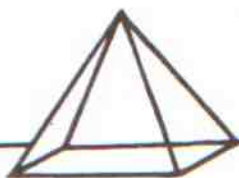


Ada Lovelace



Her full name was Augusta Ada Byron, and she was the daughter of the world-famous poet Lord Byron. Her mother was Annabella Millbanke, a proper young Englishwoman whom Lord Byron had met at a party and later married. However, the marriage ended in separation one week after the birth of their daughter, Ada.

The separation took its toll on the young Ada. She began suffering from various maladies, including severe headaches that affected her eyesight. When she was thirteen, her legs became paralyzed for several years. Eventually, Ada overcame these illnesses and even went on to become an active gymnast, dancer, and horseback rider. In addition, she proved herself to be a gifted musician. She could play the piano, harp, and violin. Ada also enjoyed math and mechanical things. In her late teens, she studied algebra and astronomy, most of which was self-taught.

It was 1833, the year of her "coming out," when Ada met Mary Somerville, a mathematician and astronomer who had written the book *The Mechanisms of the Heavens*. At another ball Ada met inventor Charles Babbage, who had been working on a computer which he called the "Difference Engine." This machine could add many numbers quickly and accurately and Ada was enthralled when Babbage demonstrated it to her. Many years later she would actually work with Babbage.

In the meantime, Ada met and married Lord King, a man eleven years her senior. Together they had three children, two boys and one girl. Ada continued to pursue her mathematical studies, so much so that she begged her mother to take care of the children for her. During their third year of marriage, Lord King inherited a new title and became Earl of Lovelace. Ada was now the Countess of Lovelace.

Charles Babbage began work on a more complex machine, the analytical engine, in the 1830s. Today's large-scale electronic digital computers still copy the logical structure of this machine. Ada wrote a paper on the powers and limitations of the invention. Her paper was highly regarded in the scientific community, and many considered her the inventor of computer programming.

Sadly, the remainder of Ada's Lovelace's life was filled with gambling debts (her own) and illness. Ada Lovelace died two weeks before her thirty-seventh birthday in 1852.

SCIENTIST OF THE WEEK

ADA LOVELACE

1. Who was Ada's father?

2. After overcoming illness, what did Ada accomplish?

3. What instruments did Ada play?

4. What did the scientific community regard Ada the inventor of?

5. How old was Ada Lovelace when she died?