The first known references to $e$ were found in a work of John Napier from 1618, where $e$ does not show up explicitly, but in a list of logarithms written in an appendix probably by William Oughtred. Jacob Bernoulli is the one believed to have found the constant itself while attempting to find the limit $\lim_{n \to \infty} (1 + \frac{1}{n})^n$. Gottfried Leibniz and Christiaan Huygens have used the constant around 1690 representing it by the letter $b$. Finally Leonhard Euler publishes his work *Mechanica* in 1736 and the constant gets its name, $e$.

Most of the today calculus books define $e$ as being the positive real number such that $\ln e = \int_1^e \frac{1}{t} dt = 1$. Starting from this definition, we give a new proof for the convergence of $\{(1 + \frac{1}{n})^n\}_n$ as a particular case of a family of sequences $\{(1 + \frac{1}{n})^{n+\epsilon}\}_n$ converging to $e$. We believe that the new proof of the monotonicity of this family of sequences will be one accessible to students in their first semester of calculus. (Received September 16, 2008)