Route–Hurwitz Criterion: A Bit of History

J.C. Maxwell, "On governors," Proc. Royal Society, no. 100, 1868

... [Stability of the governor] is mathematically equivalent to the condition that all the possible roots, and all the possible parts of the impossible roots, of a certain equation shall be negative. ... I have not been able completely to determine these conditions for equations of a higher degree than the third; but I hope that the subject will obtain the attention of mathematicians.

In 1877, Maxwell was one of the judges for the Adams Prize, a biennial competition for best essay on a scientific topic. The topic that year was stability of motion. The prize went to Edward John Routh, who solved the problem posed by Maxwell in 1868.

In 1893, Adolf Hurwitz solved the same problem, using a different method, independently of Routh.