

Clair D. Lake

Born 1888; died 1958; early IBM computer inventor and patentee of the rectangular hole in a punched card, who made significant contributions to the construction of the Harvard Mark I (ASCC).



Lake was hired by T. J. Watson, Sr., without prior calculator-like experience, to build printing tabulators for the predecessor to IBM, the CTR Corporation. Lake was highly successful at this venture; Watson rewarded him by making him head of the tabulator activities in Endicott, NY. When Howard Aiken approached IBM with the concept of building a mechanical calculator in the late 1930s, Lake was chosen to complete the assignment. At the time of the unveiling of the Harvard Mark I (ASCC), Aiken took the credit for the design *and* construction, but it would be fairer to give credit for the implementation to IBM and particularly to Clair Lake.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Biographical

Bashe, Charles, et al., *IBM's Early Computers*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1986.

UPDATES

Portrait inserted (MRW, 2013)