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


UPDATES

Portrait inserted (MRW, 2013)