# Howard Hathaway Aiken Encyclopedia Article

## Howard Hathaway Aiken

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# Howard Hathaway Aiken

**1900-1973**

American mathematician who invented the first automatic calculator. Howard Hathaway Aiken was born at the turn of the century in Hoboken, New Jersey. He studied engineering at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, then received his doctorate at Harvard University. In 1939, with the help of three other engineers at the International Business Machines (IBM) Laboratory, Aiken began work on the first automatic calculating machine. Their Mark I, which was completed in 1944, performed four operations—addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division—and was able to check back on previous results. The machine weighed 35 tons (32 metric tons), contained about 500 miles (805 km) of wire, and was able to complete its calculations without human intervention. Aiken went on to produce three more computers, including the electric Mark II in 1947.