

Weekly Student Noon-Hour Seminar

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DATE

Friday

March 1, 2013

TIME

1200-1250 pm

LOCATION

B650

MATHEMATICAL LOGIC AND THE HISTORY OF COMPUTERS

Many mathematicians and computer scientists are aware that mathematical logicians played a significant role in the original development of electronic computers, but as time has passed some of the details of this role seem to be on the verge of being forgotten. Since I was a student of H. B. Curry, who was one of the logicians involved, I know some aspects of this role which have not, to my knowledge, been published, especially some of Curry's personal recollections. In this talk, I intend to discuss my knowledge of this role, including the personal recollections, in the hope that awareness of this important role of mathematical logicians will be revived.

The talk will include:

- 1) a discussion of the role λ -calculus and combinatory logic played in the development of recursive function theory and the development of programming languages, and
- 2) a discussion of the early work of Curry and von Neumann on the ENIAC, and Curry's theory of programming which arose from that.

