

1981 July 11

Dear Jean:

In view of your urgency I must get a note to you at once. I think that I should give you a quick run down on the computing situation. Clifford and I have not gotten much credit because Mauchly, Eckert and the Sperry Rand Company have promoted the idea that they did everything that was important and have given us credit for the ^{no} origen of the ideas. SR has openly promoted this idea including an adv. in the Wall Street Journal, a center double page adv., which asserts this concept. All of this in spite of the results of the law suit which they did not appeal but cravenly paid Honeywell, who might have appealed, a large sum to accept the judges decision.

The world has advanced and there is now a publication, The Annals for the History of Computing, the purpose of which was to work out the origen of computing. If you examine this publication you will find out that we have not shown brightly on its pages. During the last ten years I have had a succession of physical problems that have impeded my efforts. I partly knew of the efforts to reduce our images but partly I could not do anything about it. Lately I have been feeling better and I have done a few things. I have made a few speeches on the subject and on 1980 Nov 11 I gave a long discourse at the museum of the Digital Equipment Company on the subject. The results was open approval of computing being a result of our efforts. I have also been in close contact with Professor Arthur Burks of the University of Michigan who was with Mauchly and Eckert in constructing the Enial. I think that at first he thought their work was original but in his last work he uses many pages to assert that the work was derived from us. He sent this paper to the Annals and ~~back~~ Eckert threatened to sue. I believe that this paper will be published about October and you should see the results.

I had previously had the idea that someone, not me, should attempt to evaluate attempt to evaluate the field and tell who did what first. The court case did that in part but it was filled up with legal jargon which was fine from my point of view but many did not want the court in the case or they did not understand the patent law. At one time I had written Prof. Burks that he should pursue this matter and in effect that is what his paper on the Zniac did, or will do when published.

During the last year or two I have come to realize that what we need is a historical paper that tell just what we did. I have also been importuned by people on both sides of this fence to write such a historical article and I have decided to do so if time permits. Last spring I worked on this and finished 25 pages and from where I am it looks like 150 pages in all. During the last two months I have not had time to work on this paper but I will as soon as the press of of summer work and the garden are over. For this paper I have a good memory and a great amount of material but I am sure that I will come up short in many respects. I would be very grateful if you sent me a copy of the material which Clifford left. I am of course not sure what that material contains but I would like to work over it.

I should perhaps say that a historical article should cover many things that a scientific article would not touch. One of these matters is Clifford's demise. I think I have told you that I find it hard to agree with the police in Long Island that he committed suicide in the way that was described. It bothers me terribly.

Thanks for the information about your children. If I can finish my article and get it published by the Annals I will undertake that you and they get copies. I do not know that it will be monumental but I am very anxious to get this job done.

I am getting old but I can work at half my early rate. Alice had Menieres Syndrom, I hope she is getting better. I have my mother with me, she will be 100 on September 1.

Very sincerely yours,