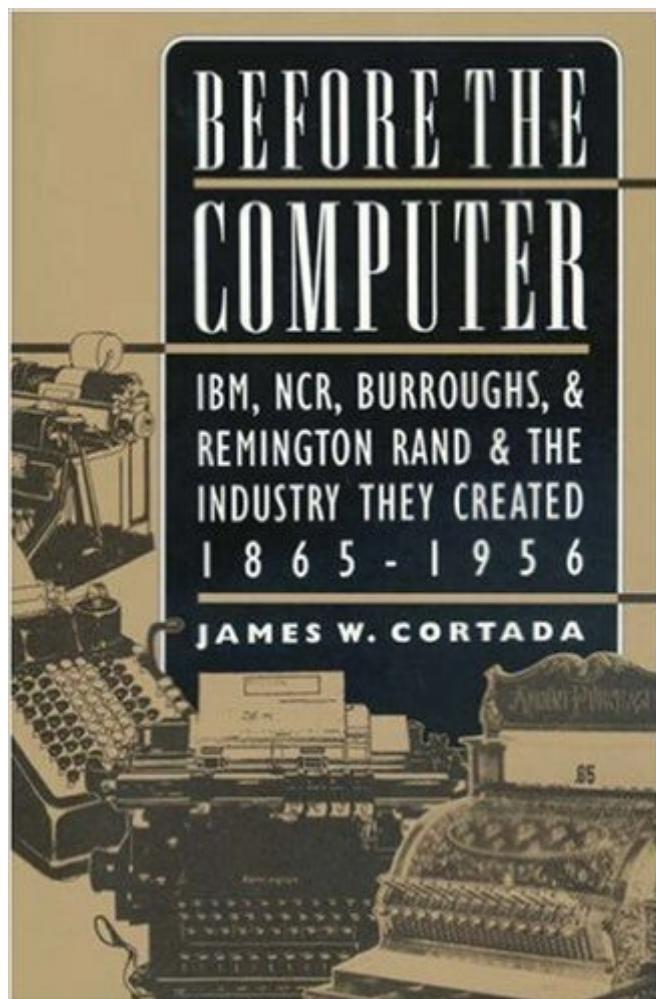


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Before The Computer



Synopsis

Before the Computer fully explores the data processing industry in the United States from its nineteenth-century inception down to the period when the computer became its primary tool. As James Cortada describes what was once called the "office appliance industry," he challenges our view of the digital computer as a revolutionary technology. Cortada interprets reliance on computers as a development within an important segment of the American economy that was earlier represented largely by such instruments as typewriters, tabulating machines, adding machines, and calculators. He also describes how many of the practices of the office appliance industry evolved into those of the computer world. Drawing on previously unavailable industry archives, the author adds to our understanding of IBM's early history and offers short corporate histories of firms that include NCR, Burroughs, and Remington Rand. Focusing on the United States but also including comparative material on Europe and Asia, *Before the Computer* will be a unique source of knowledge about the companies that built office equipment and their enormous impact on economic life. Originally published in 1993. The Princeton Legacy Library uses the latest print-on-demand technology to again make available previously out-of-print books from the distinguished backlist of Princeton University Press. These paperback editions preserve the original texts of these important books while presenting them in durable paperback editions. The goal of the Princeton Legacy Library is to vastly increase access to the rich scholarly heritage found in the thousands of books published by Princeton University Press since its founding in 1905.

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Customer Reviews

As a graduate instructor for technology courseware I was please to find such a good resource for the history of the computer industry. This is a great resource for those in the industry who wish to learn more about the early evolution of computers. It also captures the length that our society has used computers and puts a framework around what people "think" is a 10 - 20 year old industry. It definately should be a part of anyone's library who has a role in the computer industry and wishes to understand the past and how it relates to the future.

Disappointed in Princeton's press with this one. The editor should have corralled it down to about 1/4 of this length. Sweeping generalizations about business practices and mind-numbing quantities of sales figures from a century ago. Reasonably good descriptions of the old styles of machines, and great photographs, but this book drones on and on, and barely touches on either the electromechanical technologies or the business use cases in question. A more representative title would be: "Ruminations on American Office Equipment Firms".

Happy with purchase I am interested in a part of the history of it. I am not an avid reader but overall it is good

This book is looking good in the history of the computer industry and the companies that role in the industry

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