Harvard and the Mark I

Hopper was commissioned as a Lieutenant (Junior Grade) and assigned to the Bureau of Ordnance Computation Project at Harvard University. (Norwood) She worked with Howard Aiken and a team of skilled computer scientists to create the Mark I. (Seng, 5). The Mark I was a prototype for some of the first versions of the electronic computer. When asked about her first meeting with Aiken she remarked that "He said he would like to have me compute the coefficients of the arc tangent series for Thursday. Again what could I say but 'Yes, Sir.' I did not know what on earth was happening, but that was my meeting with Howard Hataway Aiken." (Seng, 6) Hopper would spend days just writing out different sequences of code for that series and other more complex problems. It did not take long for her to notice that some sequences would be used multiple times but due to the design of the mark I there was not much she could do about it. Her discovery and desire to save time and effort led to better designs for future machines that would allow some tape loops to be used. (Seng, 6)

Here is a link back to the timeline: https://www.timetoast.com/timelines/2682524