

12-14-1994

Interview no. 871

Robert Upton

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UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO

INSTITUTE OF ORAL HISTORY

INTERVIEWEE: Robert Upton

INTERVIEWER: Michelle L. Gomilla

PROJECT: World War II

DATE OF INTERVIEW: December 14, 1994

TERMS OF USE: Unrestricted

TAPE NO: 871

TRANSCRIPT NO: _____

TRANSCRIBER: _____

BIOGRAPHICAL SYNOPSIS OF INTERVIEWEE:

Former Technician, 5th Grade, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; born 13 January 1928 in Pasadena, California.

SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW:

Recollects brief period spent at Los Alamos, New Mexico, designated installation for The Manhattan Project; shares impressions of Julius Robert Oppenheimer and Enrico Fermi, Manhattan Project physicists; work experiences at Kirtland Air Force Base and Sandia Base Laboratory, Albuquerque, New Mexico; visit to Trinity Site; explains construction of wooden duplicates of atomic bombs used in ballistic testing; assignation to Salton Sea, area at north end of Imperial Valley in southeast California; participation of German scientists in The Manhattan Project; transfer to Fort Bliss, El Paso, Texas; German POWs at Fort Bliss, including German engineer Werher Von Braun; Von Braun's role in development of V-2 rockets at White Sands Missile Range; recalls German POWs attending Plaza Theater in downtown El Paso; current controversy surrounding dropping of atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki; fire bombing of Tokyo; sentiments on forced relocation and internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II.

Length of Interview: 45 minutes Length of Transcript