

PRE-NUCLEAR EXPLOSION AND THE MANHATTAN PROJECT

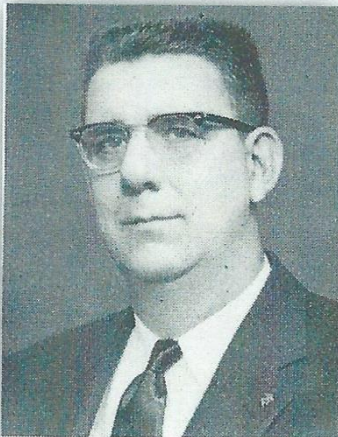
By Gloria Stephens

The December 6, 1917, Halifax Explosion is officially recognized as the largest man-made pre-nuclear explosion before the two nuclear bombs that hit Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan in 1945. The effects of the Halifax explosion was studied by Oppenheimer in calculating the strength for the atomic bomb. In particular, on the 'method of fusing' in order to achieve the greatest efficiency in an explosion of 1800 plus tons of TNT. The development of the atomic bomb was known as the Manhattan Project.



Harold Purdy Webb, participated on this Manhattan Project as a civilian 'heat treating specialist' and was directly involved in the development of the container construction for the atomic device.

From Harold's personal written resume:



Harold P. Webb,

"1941-1943; after the closing of Standard Tin Plate Mill, I was employed at another subsidiary of Continental Can company, the Concan Ordinance at Terre Haute, Indiana. This division was engaged in processing explosives for the government. I was selected as one of a group to take special training in ammunition loading at the United States Experimental Arsenal at Picatinny, New Jersey, also an advance course at Parsons, Kansas. The above assignments were carried out during construction of the plant at Terre Haute, Indiana. I was General Foreman, with approximately four hundred workers under my supervision.

1943-1945; At the request of one of the officials of Continental Can company, I went to Decatur, Illinois to work on the Manhattan Project. This part of the Manhattan Project was being operated by

Hondaille-Hershey Corporation at their Garfield division. As preparations for this latter job, I spend several months in a training course devised by Columbia University and administered by International Nickel Company at Huntington, West Virginia. I was classified as Superintendent, with approximately twenty foremen and six hundred to eight hundred employees under my supervision.

1945-1947: After completion of the atomic bomb project at Decatur, Illinois, I was transferred to Hondaille-Hershey Corporation's Huntington division as a Superintendent in the Manufacturing of automobile bumpers and related parts. I left this organization for health reasons following a serious injury".

Harold received a Citation from President Harry Truman for his participation on the Manhattan Project. NOTE (*Harold P. Webb, a brother to the writer's father, Carl C. Webb. Uncle to the writer- Gloria (Webb) Stephens*)