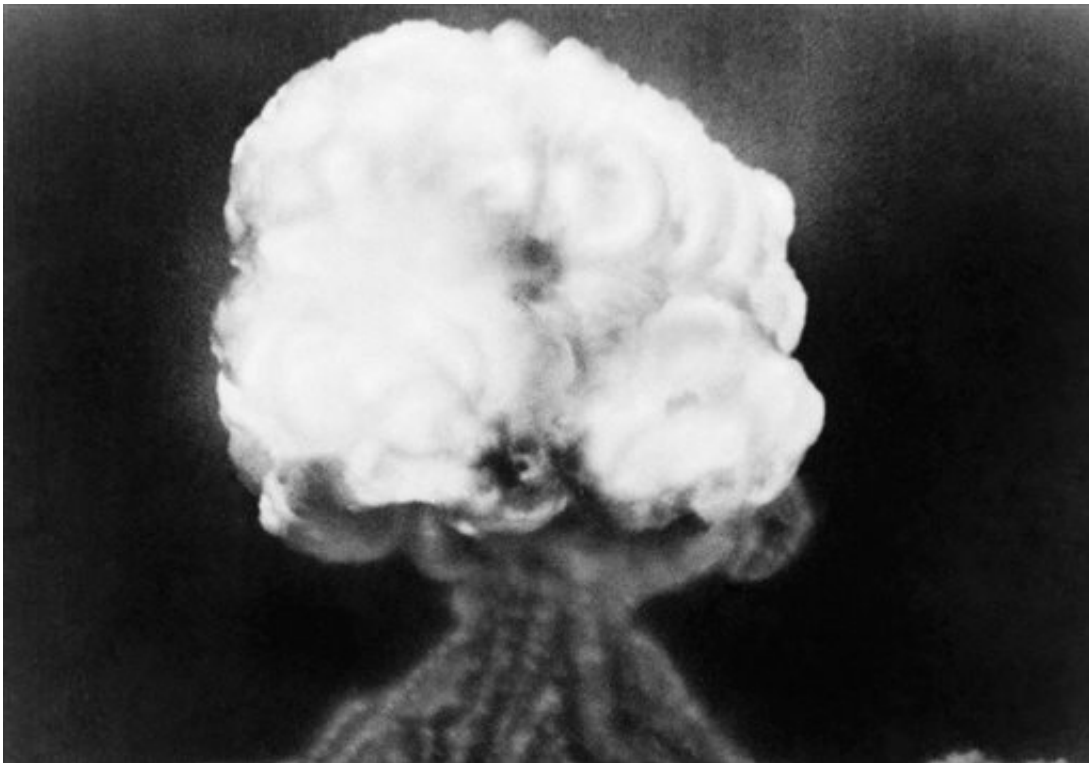


# Atomic bomb test marks 70th birthday amid renewed interest

July 16 2015, by Russell Contreras

---



This July 16, 1945 photo, shows the mushroom cloud of the first atomic explosion at Trinity Test Site, New Mexico. Thursday, July 16, 2015 marks the 70th anniversary of the Trinity Test in southern New Mexico comes amid renewed interest in the Manhattan Project thanks to new books, online video testimonies and the WGN America drama series "Manhattan.(AP Photo, File)

When a flash of light beamed from the arid New Mexico desert early on July 16, 1945, residents of the historic Hispanic village of Tularosa felt

windows shake and heard dishes fall. Some in the largely Catholic town fell to their knees and prayed.

The end of the world is here, they thought.

What villagers didn't know was that just before 5:30 a.m., scientists from the then-secret city of Los Alamos successfully exploded the first [atomic bomb](#) at the nearby Trinity Site. Left in its place was a crater that stretched a half-mile wide and several feet deep.

Thursday marks the 70th anniversary of the Trinity Test in southern New Mexico. It comes as Tularosa residents say they were permanently affected by the test and want acknowledgement and compensation from the U.S. government.

Tina Cordova, co-founder of the Tularosa Basin Downwinders, said the aftermath caused rare forms of cancer for many of the 30,000 residents in the area surrounding Trinity. She said residents weren't told about the site's dangers and often picnicked there and took artifacts, including the radioactive green glass known as "trinitite."

Researchers from the National Cancer Institute are studying past and present cancer cases in New Mexico that might be related to the Trinity Test.

"It's a moral and ethical issue. It's about consent," said Cordova, a former Tularosa resident and cancer survivor. "We were never given the opportunity to do anything to protect ourselves, before or after."



This Tuesday, July 14, 2015 video frame grab shows Rosalie Cordova talks about her late husband, Anastacio Cordova, in her daughters home in Albuquerque, N.M. Her husband, who died in 2013 after suffering from multiple bouts of cancer, was allegedly affected by the atomic bomb Trinity Test in 1945 in New Mexico since he lived nearby in Tularosa, N.M, as a child. Thursday marks the 70th anniversary of the Trinity Test in southern New Mexico and comes amid renewed interest in the Manhattan Project thanks to new books, video oral histories and a WGN America television drama series. (AP Photo/Russell Contreras)

Vera Burnett-Powell, a spokeswoman for the U.S. Department of Justice's Radiation Exposure Compensation Act program, did not immediately return a phone message and email from The Associated Press.

Cordova's father, Anastacio "Tacho" Cordova, was a 3-year-old Tularosa

resident at the time of the blast and later suffered from multiple forms of cancer. He died in 2013, and Cordova believes his illnesses were related to Trinity's aftermath.

The anniversary also comes amid renewed interest in the Manhattan Project, the secretive World War II program that provided enriched uranium for the atomic bomb.

Last year, for example, President Barack Obama signed federal legislation to create the Manhattan Project National Historical Park to preserve sites that helped with the bomb's creation.

During the project, Los Alamos scientists worked to develop the bomb that was dropped on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It involved three research and production facilities at Los Alamos; Oak Ridge, Tennessee; and Hanford, Washington.

Retired physicist Duane Hughes, who gives tours at the National Museum of Nuclear Science & History in Albuquerque, said the history of the Trinity Test is important because it helped end World War II and set the stage for a Cold War arms race.



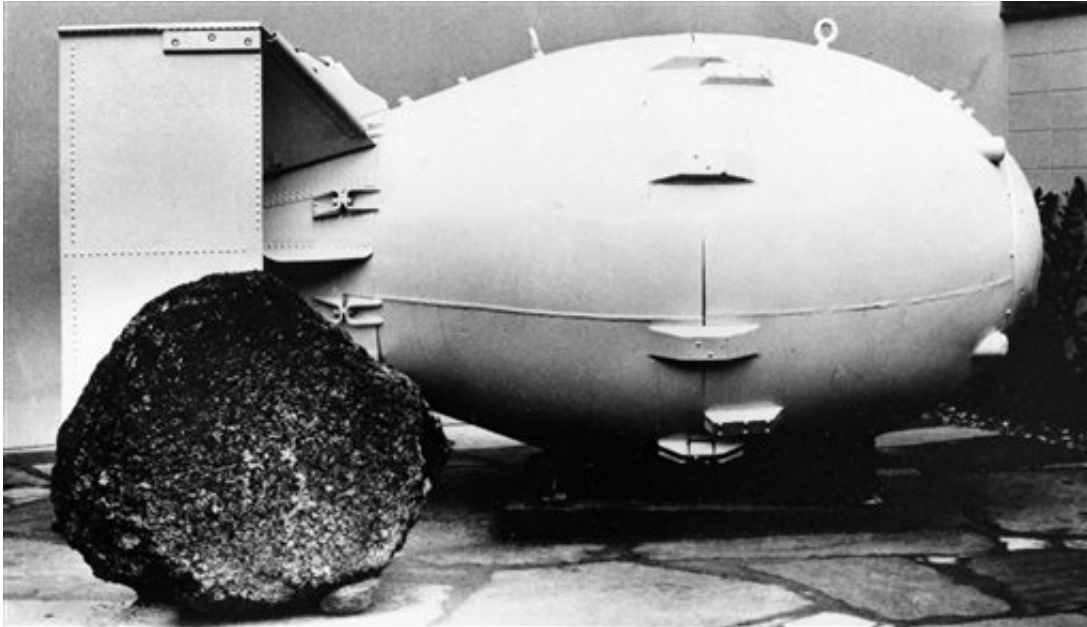
This Monday, July 13, 2015 photo shows a visitor to the Bradbury Science Museum in Los Alamos, N.M. examines a replica of "the gadget". The gadget was the atomic bomb tested at the Trinity Test Site on July 16, 1945. Thursday marks the 70th anniversary of the Trinity Test in southern New Mexico and comes amid renewed interest in the Manhattan Project thanks to new books, video oral histories and a WGN America television drama series. (AP Photo/Russell Contreras)

"I don't know if anyone thought it was a failure," Hughes said. "It really changed the history of the world."

Meanwhile, writers with the WGN America show "Manhattan" are tackling questions about Trinity for its upcoming second season. The series follows a group of Los Alamos scientists as they face moral quandaries involving the bomb.

The show doesn't seek to preach but hopes to demonstrate the project's

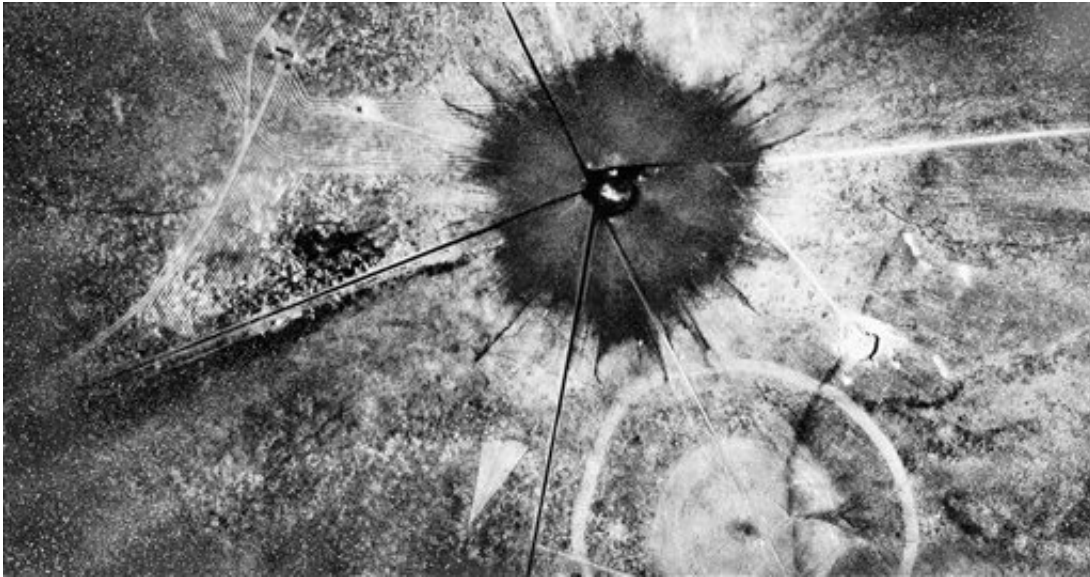
complexities, "Manhattan" creator Sam Shaw said.



This Oct. 15, 1965 photo shows a "Fat Man" nuclear bomb of the type tested at Trinity Site, N.M, and dropped on Nagasaki, Japan in 1945, on view for the public at the Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory Museum. Thursday, July 16, 2015 marks the 70th anniversary of the Trinity Test in southern New Mexico comes amid renewed interest in the Manhattan Project thanks to new books, online video testimonies and the WGN America drama series "Manhattan. (AP Photo, File)

Shaw didn't want to give away too many details of the upcoming season. But he said with the Trinity Test a focus, writers couldn't ignore the plight of residents from nearby towns like Tularosa.

"Some of the aspects of that story ... still exist on the horizon for us and for this show," he said. "But the story from the beginning, I think, has been as much about secrets and secrecy as it has been about a weapon."



This July 16, 1945 photo, shows an aerial view after the first atomic explosion at Trinity Test Site, N.M. Thursday, July 16, 2015 marks the 70th anniversary of the Trinity Test in southern New Mexico comes amid renewed interest in the Manhattan Project thanks to new books, online video testimonies and the WGN America drama series "Manhattan.(AP Photo, File)



This July 13, 2015 photo shows replicas of atomic bombs "Little Boy," left, and "Fatman," both dropped on Japan during World War II, sit at the Bradbury Science Museum in Los Alamos, N.M. Thursday, July 16, marks the 70th anniversary of the Trinity Test in southern New Mexico and comes amid renewed interest in the Manhattan Project thanks to new books, video oral histories and a WGN America television drama series. (AP Photo/Russell Contreras)





This Monday, July 13, 2015 photo shows visitors to the Bradbury Science Museum in Los Alamos, N.M., walk by a replica of "the gadget". The gadget was the atomic bomb tested at the Trinity Test Site on July 16, 1945. Thursday marks the 70th anniversary of the Trinity Test in southern New Mexico and comes amid renewed interest in the Manhattan Project thanks to new books, video oral histories and a WGN America television drama series. (AP Photo/Russell Contreras)



This Tuesday, July 14, 2015 video frame grab Tina Cordova talks of her late father, Anastacio Cordova, in her Albuquerque home. Cordova believes her father, who died in 2013 after suffering from multiple bouts of cancer, was affected by the atomic bomb Trinity Test in New Mexico since he lived in nearby Tularosa, N.M. as a child. Thursday marks the 70th anniversary of the Trinity Test in southern New Mexico and comes amid renewed interest in the Manhattan Project thanks to new books, video oral histories and a WGN America television drama series. (AP Photo/Russell Contreras)



This Tuesday, July 14, 2015 photo Tina Cordova points to early photos of her late father, Anastacio Cordova, in her Albuquerque home. Cordova believes her father, who died in 2013 after suffering from multiple bouts of cancer, was affected by the atomic bomb Trinity Test from 1945 in New Mexico since he lived in nearby Tularosa, N.M, as a child. Thursday marks the 70th anniversary of the Trinity Test in southern New Mexico and comes amid renewed interest in the Manhattan Project thanks to new books, video oral histories and a WGN America television drama series. (AP Photo/Russell Contreras)

© 2015 The Associated Press. All rights reserved.

Citation: Atomic bomb test marks 70th birthday amid renewed interest (2015, July 16) retrieved 6 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2015-07-atomic-70th-birthday-renewed.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is

provided for information purposes only.