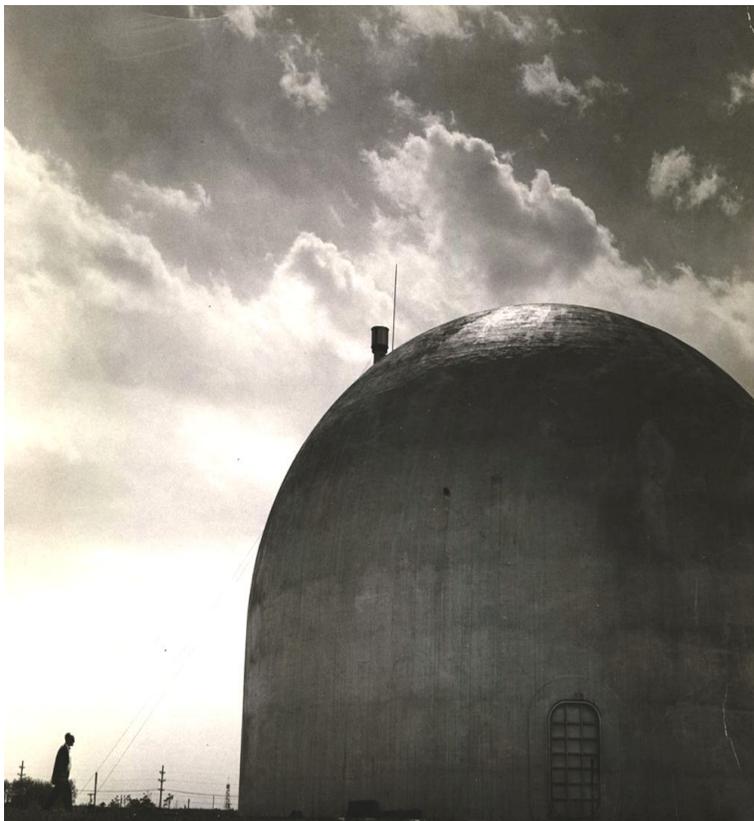


April 2015

**The Dawn of the Atomic Age and Beyond:
Photographs from Argonne National Laboratory**

Argonne National Laboratory is closely related to the initial experiments by Enrico Fermi's team in Chicago that led to the creation of the atomic bombs in World War II. However researchers coming to the National Archives at Chicago to use the Records of the Atomic Energy Commission from Argonne National Laboratory will find a trove of photograph that uncovers a variety of people and activities from the center.



“Silhouetted against the southwestern sky, the man and his reactor. Joseph M. Harrer, project manager of the Experimental Boiling Water Reactor, and the steel containment shell which houses the reactor. The shell is 80 feet in diameter and rises 63 feet above ground. An Additional 56 feet is below ground.” (Record Group 326)
(Archie Lieberman, Black Star photography agency)

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The National Archives at Chicago is located at:

7358 S. Pulaski Road
Chicago, IL 60629-5898
773-948-9001
chicago.archives@nara.gov

The National Archives at Chicago research rooms are open to the public Monday through Friday, and the second Saturday of every month, from 8:00 AM to 4:15 PM.



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The series “Photographs relating to scientific work, professional meetings, publicity, and other activities, 1942-1972” (National Archives Identifier 594769) consists of approximately 5,000 images and assorted pamphlets and negatives from the Office of Public Affairs at Argonne National Laboratory, along with some of its predecessor and affiliated locations. Argonne National Laboratory, located near Lemont, Illinois, opened on July 1, 1946 as the first national laboratory. It was founded to continue the work started at the University of Chicago with the first nuclear reactor, Chicago Pile-1 (or CP-1), part of the Manhattan Project that helped to produce the first atomic bombs during World War II.

The photographs include coverage of the many anniversaries of the first man-made self-sustaining nuclear chain reaction, which, under the direction of Enrico Fermi, occurred on December 2, 1942. There also are numerous folders of photographs of the many members of this initial team at the University of Chicago who helped begin work at Argonne.



The team who worked on the first man-made self-sustaining nuclear chain reaction, including Leona Woods-Marshall-Libby. Leona Woods, a LaGrange, Illinois native, was the youngest member of the team and the only woman. She graduated from Lyons Township High School at age 14, received her BS in Chemistry from the University of Chicago at the age of 18, and assisted in the work with Fermi at age 23. According to her obituary, by the time of her death in 1986, she “had published about 200 scientific papers and wrote three books including *The Uranium People* (an autobiography of her early atomic research and work) and *Past Climates*. She also made contributions to chemistry, physics, astronomy, geophysics and environmental studies.” (Record Group 326)



Left: Stagg Field in 1926, the stadium that concealed CP-1 (Chicago Pile-1), the first reactor, at the University of Chicago in Hyde Park. The site is now the home of the Joseph Regenstein library, the main library of University of Chicago. (Record Group 326)

Below: 1957 photo of the demolition of Stagg Field at the University of Chicago. (Record Group 326)





The reactor was eventually moved from Stagg Field to the Red Gate Woods in Cook County Forest Preserve then to its final home at the newly built Argonne National Laboratory. The photo to the left is the memorial placed at Red Gate Woods near Willow Springs, Illinois. The one below is an undated photograph from the 1940s shows the grounds which began as farmland and the St. Patrick's Cemetery, founded in 1849. This plot of land sits just next to Argonne National Laboratory, and contains the burials of many Irish immigrants from the 19th century. (Record Group 326)



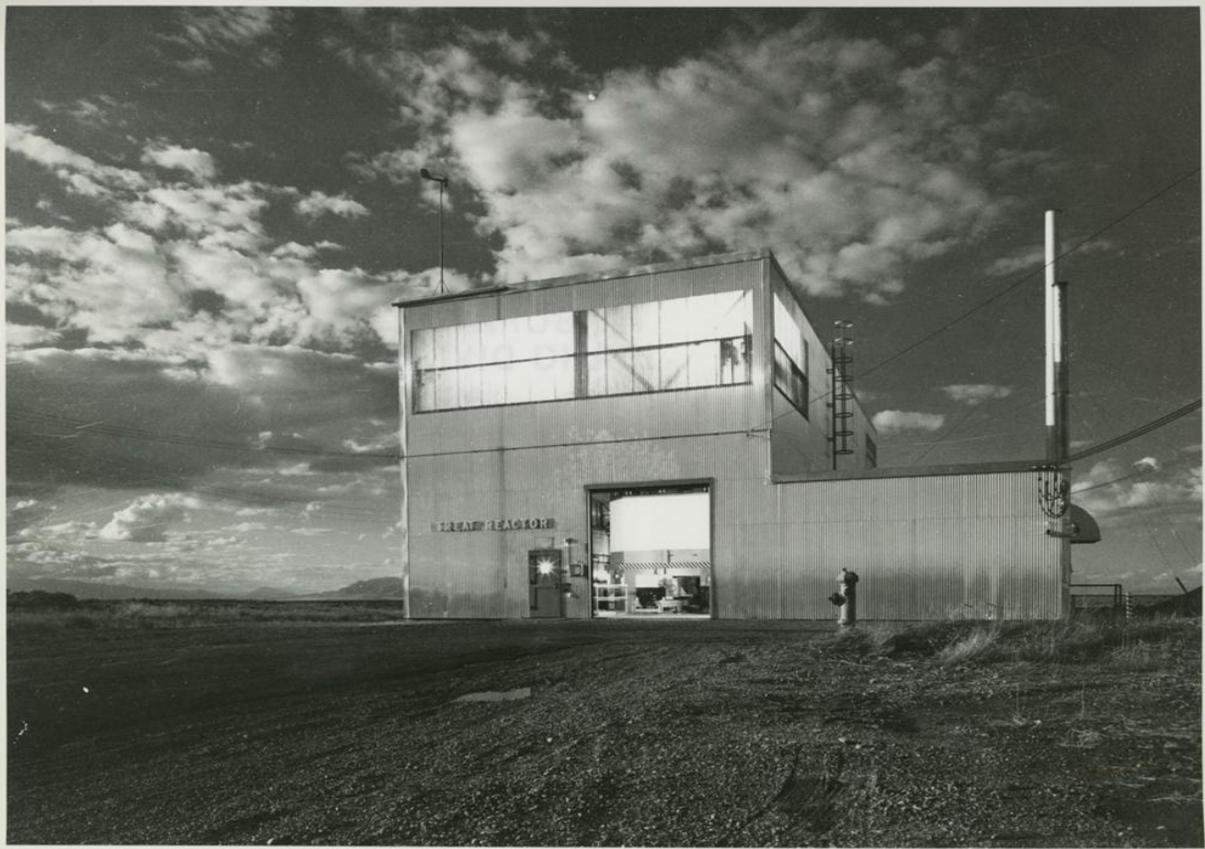
The photo series also includes images of two presidents, John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson. The images of LBJ are of his visit to Argonne National Laboratory-West, in Idaho. This site was where electricity was first generated from nuclear fission. Other photographs are from this site and other national laboratories across the country.



Above: Seaborg with JFK at the White House on November 27, 1962. Photo credit: Abbie Rowe. (Record Group 326)

Right: Glenn T. Seaborg with LBJ at the Idaho Argonne Laboratory. Seaborg advised ten U.S. Presidents on nuclear policy, from Harry Truman to William Clinton. (Record Group 326)





Above: Photograph from Argonne West, Idaho (Record Group 326)

Below: Sheep grazing at Argonne. "Guess who's coming to dinner?" 6/4/1969 written on back. (Record Group 326)





Employee at Argonne in 1970. (Record Group 326)



Employees of Argonne being treated for radiation exposure at the University of Chicago. (Record Group 326)

The series also includes hundreds of proof sheets of images taken by Argonne photographers. Few of these images were enlarged and only exist on the proof sheets. One very unique proof includes a roll of film taken in February 1972 in downtown Chicago. They provide an interesting glance into a cold day in the city in the early 1970s.



The National Archives at Chicago Announces Workshops for 2015

Ancestry Presents Ancestry

Saturday, May 9, 9:30 – 11:00 AM

It's a family affair! Loretto "Lou" Szucs and her daughter Juliana Smith will provide an overview and strategies for searching the world's largest online family history resource.

BAMM! Business, Agriculture, Manufacturing, and Mortality Census Schedules

Saturday, June 13, 9:30 – 11:00 AM

BAMM! Add "explosive" details to your genealogy by utilizing non-population Census schedules of Business, Agriculture, Manufacturing and Mortality. Authorized by Congress, these records cover very specific time periods and locations during the 19th and 20th centuries and provide unique insights into the communities where our ancestors lived and worked. Kris Maldre Jarosik, Education Specialist at NARA-Chicago, will help you learn about these records.

Sign Up!

Each workshop is free and will be held at our facility near Ford City Mall at 7358 South Pulaski Road, Chicago, Illinois. Space is limited, so please RSVP to save a seat by sending an e-mail to kristina.jarosik@nara.gov. Please indicate in your e-mail which workshop you are interested in attending.

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