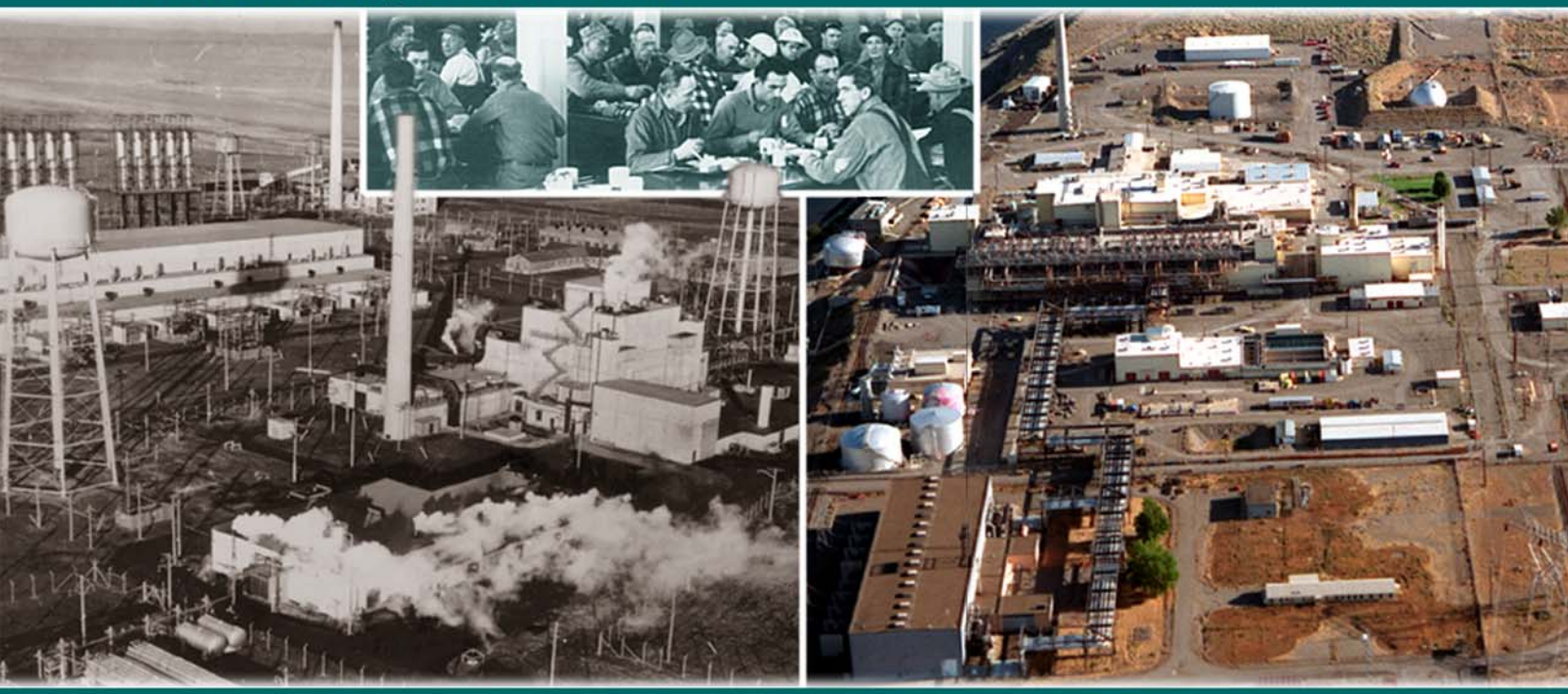
The Hanford Site Historic District

Manhattan Project 1943 – 1946



Cold War Era 1947 – 1990

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Collage 1-r: B Reactor, 1940s Construction Workers at Lunch, N Reactor

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History of the Plutonium Production Facilities at the Hanford Site Historic District, 1943-1990

June 2002

Hanford Cultural and Historic Resources Program
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	Appendix B	- T Plant

Contents

Page

Chapter 1: Historic Overview 1.1

Chapter 2: Plutonium Production Facilities 2.1

Section 1: Construction History 2-1.1

Section 2: Fuel Manufacturing 2-2.1

Section 3: Reactor Operations 2-3.1

Section 4: Chemical Separations 2-4.1

Section 5: Plutonium Finishing 2-5.1

Section 6: Waste Management 2-6.1

Section 7: Research and Development 2-7.1

Section 8: Site Security 2-8.1

Section 9: Military Operations 2-9.1

Section 10: Worker Health and Safety 2-10.1

Section 11: Transportation, Communication, Site Support 2-11.1

Section 12: History of Workers at the Hanford Site 2-12.1

Chapter 3: Guide to Resources 3.1

Chapter 4: Recommendations for Future Uses 4.1

Key Dates D.1

List of Figures F.1

List of Tables T.1

References Cited R.1

Bibliography for Further Information B.1

Glossary G.1

Index I.1

Appendices - Published Only on the Internet **Internet URL**

Appendix A http://www.hanford.gov/docs/rl-97-1047/biographies/index.htm
Biographies of the Historic Buildings Task Group Members

Appendix B ..... http://www.hanford.gov/docs/rl-97-1047/appendix_b.htm
Historic American Engineering Records and Historic Property Inventory Forms

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Preface

The U.S. Department of Energy Richland Operations Office and the Washington State Historic Preservation Office designated the Manhattan Project and Cold War facilities of the Hanford Site a historic district eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places in 1996. The purpose of this book is to preserve in words, diagrams, and photographs the structures at the Hanford Site during the Manhattan Project and Cold War Era because the majority of them have been or will be demolished. Because of the national and international significance of the Hanford Site, we hope certain properties will be left in place to illustrate the scope and scale of the various missions that developed the atomic energy program and supported national security. Those facilities that must be demolished because of safety concerns and lack of a future use will at least live on in this book.

This book is the result of a regulatory agreement between the U.S. Department of Energy, the Washington State Historic Preservation Office, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. They agreed that a historic narrative (this book) would be written to record

- Information about the roles played by different property types and/or processes at the Hanford Site
- Numbers of buildings/structures within the different property types and their locations
- Changes in technology, design, and use of the different property types over time
- Photographs, plans, and cross sections of representative samples that document the form or manifestation of different property types

The U.S. Department of Energy's present mission at the Hanford Site is cleanup: restore the Columbia River Corridor, transition the Central Plateau to long-term waste storage and treatment operations, and prepare for the future. None of the accomplishments fulfilling the U.S. Department of Energy's present mission are described in this book. The time period covered in this book is 1943-1990—the years spanning the Manhattan Project and Cold War era. The book is the result of research into the facilities and processes that took place within those facilities at the Hanford Site during that time period. This book is not a definitive history nor an investigation or interpretation of issues nor a prognosis on the clean up of the Hanford Site or activities beyond 1990. That we leave to future researchers, who we hope will use the resources in this book as a springboard for their work.

Part of the agreement with the Washington State Historic Preservation Office and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation is that the book will be published as a hard copy. This has limited the amount of space we can devote to each topic. Even with that limitation, the book is voluminous and will have a very limited distribution of the hard copy edition. We are publishing the book on the Internet to make it accessible to more readers. The appendices will only be published on the Internet, not in the hard copy.