



# Uncle Phil and the Atomic Bomb

*Philip H. Abelson, John Abelson*

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**Uncle Phil and the Atomic Bomb** Philip H. Abelson, John Abelson

Uncle Phil and the Atomic Bomb is the story of Philip Abelson, a highly regarded scientist, the editor of Science magazine, and the President of the Carnegie Institution of Washington. The story begins in Philip Abelson's voice describing his roots growing up in Tacoma, Washington and ends with his experiences in the World War II effort to build the atomic bomb. His story in the war effort is unique in that he did not work at the Manhattan project facilities in Los Alamos, Oak Ridge or Hanford, Washington; rather, he worked at the Naval Research Institute in Washington, D.C. on a project he had initiated himself, the implementation of liquid thermal diffusion as an efficient and effective method for separating uranium-235 (which is fissionable) from the much more common uranium-238 (which is not fissionable). Abelson's efforts made possible not only the atomic bomb, but also postwar uses of atomic energy, such as nuclear-powered submarines (something Abelson was also instrumental in designing). Throughout, Philip Abelson's nephew, John Abelson, also a scientist, stitches the story together with his own insights into his uncle's life.

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