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# “Impact Los Alamos”: Managing Editor’s Introduction

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SCOTT D. HUGHES

Readers of the *New Mexico Historical Review* will notice a major departure from our usual format with this issue. Published herein are edited versions of papers presented in public symposia convened during the spring of 1996 in the New Mexico towns of Los Alamos, Alcalde, Alamogordo, and Albuquerque. Carlos Vázquez, director of the University of New Mexico’s Oral History Program, coordinated these presentations in conjunction with the project “Impact Los Alamos: Traditional New Mexico in a High Tech World.” The project, underway since 1992, seeks to build a collection of oral histories and material artifacts detailing the Los Alamos National Laboratory’s effect on its neighboring northern New Mexico region, an area centered on the Española Valley. Additional materials include a bibliography, a standardized interview questionnaire used for “Impact: Los Alamos,” symposia audience responses, and a photographic essay round out this unique issue.

Familiar to most, Los Alamos is the birthplace of the atomic bomb, the weapon that wrought a revolution in warfare and human history. Crucial as Los Alamos’ global impact has been, its influence on local people and communities has often been neglected. The essays included in this issue present perspectives from authors who offer historical context and explanation of what Los Alamos’ existence has meant to its surrounding peoples and communities.

The provocative and insightful symposia presentations published here are not oral history. Rather, they reflect the authors’ viewpoints on Los Alamos’ meaning within the context of New Mexico, especially its northern region. It remains for our readers to decide the validity of these positions. As always, the staff of the *New Mexico Historical Review* disclaims any responsibility for the views expressed by contributors.

In the twentieth century's closing years, the burgeoning field of oral history provides important new knowledge and a methodology for anyone interested in contemporary events. Through various activities, the UNM Oral History Program and its director, Carlos Vásquez, have made important contributions to the field. Now in its fourth year, the program's "Impact Los Alamos" has established a foundation of oral recollections and other materials that help illustrate various local and statewide effects of Los Alamos. This preliminary collection will expand as more people contribute their reminiscences through video- and audio-taped interviews. These materials will eventually be accessible through various media at the University of New Mexico's Center for Southwest Research located in Albuquerque. Anyone interested in exploring this body of research can contact the UNM Oral History Program at (505) 272-7755.