## 1945 August 6-12

## Trane Company and the A-Bomb

The massive Manhattan Project to create the atomic bomb required contributions by many companies on the homefront. One of them was the Trane Company in La Crosse, Wisconsin.

James Trane started a family plumbing business in La Crosse in 1885. He was joined by his son, Reuben, who was a mechanical engineer. What set them apart from other plumbers was their creation of a lowpressure steam heating system.<sup>1</sup>

James, Reuben, and Stella Trane incorporated the Trane Company in 1913 as a heating and plumbing business.<sup>2</sup>

The company patented its first air conditioner in 1931. Seven years after that, Trane developed a new water chiller for air conditioning large buildings.<sup>3</sup>

During World War II, the Trane Company, along with many other manufacturers in the area, produced equipment that aided the war effort. By the end of 1942, 95 percent of the work that the 1,022 Trane employees produced was for war production.<sup>4</sup>

For example, Trane air conditioning units decreased the humidity from the air entering blast furnaces. This application regulated the humidity in blast furnaces and increased steel output by 10 percent. 5 The steel produced was also of better quality.<sup>6</sup>

The Trane contribution to the making of the atomic bomb was much more closely guarded.

## **Trane Company Ships Units** To Two Atomic Bomb Plants Trane company for more than | Trane

Trane company for more than two years has been shipping vast equantities of heating, cooling, air sonditioning, air handling and heat exchanging equipment to the two plants producing the new atomic bomb. During that time at least one piece of every type of equipment to the two plants producing that time at least one piece of every type of equipment. The manufactures has been project has resulted in much specific project has resulted in much specific project has resulted in much specific plants. ment Trane manufactures has been shipped to the various contractors engaged on the immense projects at Hanford Village, Wash., and Oak

Ridge, Tenn.
Because of the extreme secrecy surrounding the projects, Trane company officials have not been able to determine the exact management is heing used. It is not known at the being used. It is not known at the present time what or how much equipment is being used in the actual processes involved in producing the new explosive or what equipment is being used for comfort applications for the thousands of employes on the project.

which has received wide acclain as the most authoritative treati

project has resulted in much sp lation among Trane workers the exact nature of the working done there. During the years government censorship been effective on much of work done by Trane, but no of "secrets" have been so well closely guarded by government of ficials. On the day President Tr man announced the atomic be orders for additional equipment be shipped to both projects w being processed in the Trane fice and though these were no ferent from many others dled in the last two years. of employes on the project.

In addition to the equipment, engineers on the projects have ordered a good many copies of the an end to the war. ployes felt a new exciting intere as they realized they were help to build the bomb that may be

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## **Sources & Notes:**

<sup>1</sup> "Rich Heritage," *Trane Technologies*, 2019, <a href="https://www.trane.com/commercial/north-america/us/en/about-">https://www.trane.com/commercial/north-america/us/en/about-</a> us/our-history.html.

<sup>2</sup> "Trane Firm Incorporates," *La Crosse Tribune*, La Crosse, Wisconsin, 1913 April 5, page 6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Trane Technologies.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> "La Crosse At War," *La Crosse Tribune*, La Crosse, Wisconsin, 1942 December 31, page 13.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> "Trane Blast Furnace Air Conditioning Units Speed Up Production Of Nation's Steel Mills," *La Crosse Tribune*, La Crosse, Wisconsin, 1942 July 12, page 2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> "Trane Plant Aids In U.S. Effort To Boost Quality Steel Production," *La Crosse Tribune*, La Crosse, Wisconsin, 1942 February 23, page 1.