

the success of the project. George is a scientist's scientist. There are many things about him that impress me. One is that I know of no one who is more familiar with chemical literature. He seems to absorb and remember just about everything that he's ever read or heard. I don't know how he does it but if you want to get information on some early phase of this work or any related field, you can always get it from George.

**GEORGE E. BOYD** One of the great things about these early days to those who were associated in this intellectual voyage were the people that we came into contact with. I was an undergraduate, a graduate student, and an instructor in the Chemistry Department under Herman Schlesinger's chairmanship, and I remember clearly how we were impressed by the way in which the whole chemistry effort moved after these brilliant fellows came to Chicago.

I got into the Plutonium Project because in the State of Michigan anyone who goes deep into a copper mine in the upper peninsula must be accompanied. Volney Wilson, one of Arthur Compton's graduate students, was working on the penetrating meson component in cosmic rays and needed someone to go with him into one of those mines, which go down several miles through thick layers of dense basalt rock. Later, Compton, knowing me as a chemist, asked if I would help out in chemical matters in connection with the study group on uranium fission that he had organized in the Chicago Physics Department.

I remember those days in 1942 because Professor Compton, after great study of the literature on uranium fission, decided that the rare earths were going to be very important. He was really right in a way that no one could have foreseen, because as we know now plutonium and the other heavier elements form a second "rare-earth-like" series.

He invited a great chemist, Herbert N. McCoy, who was an expert on the chemistry of europium and was known as the co-discoverer with Frederick Soddy of the concept of isotopes. McCoy had worked for a long time in radioactivity and also knew a great deal about rare earths. My apprenticeship to him consisted of going out to the Lindsay Light and Chemical Company plant and working with him on uranium. It's hard to believe how ignorant we were chemically of the then known heavy elements. I, for one, had never seen a uranium compound before!

Fermi\* wanted some uranium dioxide. The black oxide was available in West Chicago as a by-product so McCoy and I were to make

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\*Enrico Fermi, the Italian physicist, led the team of scientists who built the first nuclear reactor at the University of Chicago under the West Stands of the Stagg Field stadium. This reactor sustained a chain reaction on December 2, 1942.