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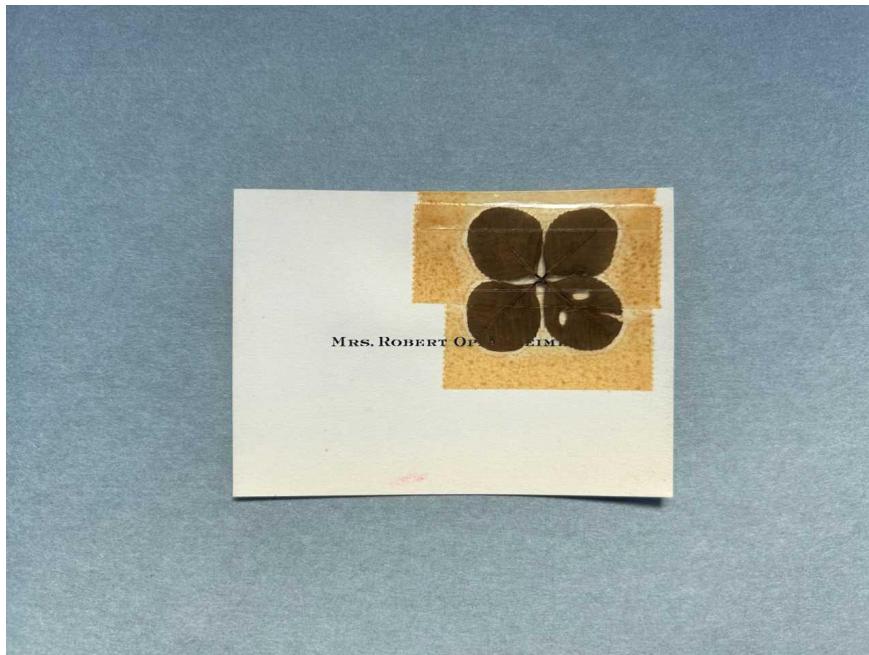
Author(s): Mitchell, Renae L. PhD

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This St. Patrick's Day, take a look at “lucky” Lab artifacts from the Manhattan Project

By [National Security Research Center](#) staff

What luck! Tucked inside J. Robert Oppenheimer’s book *Bhagavad-Gita* is a four-leaf clover.

The famed physicist and first Lab director regularly quoted the Hindu scripture, most notably upon witnessing the [Trinity test](#), which was the successful detonation of the first-ever Los Alamos created atomic bomb. Oppenheimer was said to have recalled the line, “Now I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds.” (The quote, though, has been [widely misinterpreted](#).)

The clover is taped to what appears to be a calling card from his spouse Kitty and was found inside his copy of the *Bhagavad Gita*, which was donated to the Lab’s Bradbury Science Museum by private donors Ben and Sara Beck Svetitsky in early 2020.

Kitty Oppenheimer was educated as a botanist and biologist, and accompanied her husband to Los Alamos, along with their two children. The family was here in 1943 through the end of World War II in 1945.

The book, with the card found inside, makes up one of two of J. Robert Oppenheimer’s personal effects within the Lab’s collections.

The other is his Bank of England [office chair](#), which is the lucky color green, which may or may not be a coincidence. The chair, available in catalogs from 1930-1943, was typically offered in a stained birch color. Oppenheimer's chair, however, is a new color – #28, according to its label – which means the green color was customized. “It’s possible someone did deliberately choose green paint. It’s a mystery!,” said Wendy Strohmeyer (CP-BSM), who oversees the collections at the Bradbury Science Museum, including Oppenheimer’s book and chair.

Meanwhile – and coincidentally green in color – [the Fat Man bomb manual](#), whose patent is in Oppenheimer’s name, is among the more than 14 million materials in the collections of the National Security Research Center (NSRC), which is the Lab’s classified library.

“Fat Man” was the codename for the implosion-type nuclear weapon designed by Los Alamos scientists to help end World War II. A retired scientist likely received the green-covered manual from one of the original weaponeers, [according to NSRC Senior Historian Alan Carr](#). The manual is one of 25 originals, but the NSRC has the only-known copy still in existence.

We are lucky to have these items.

Learn more about Oppenheimer

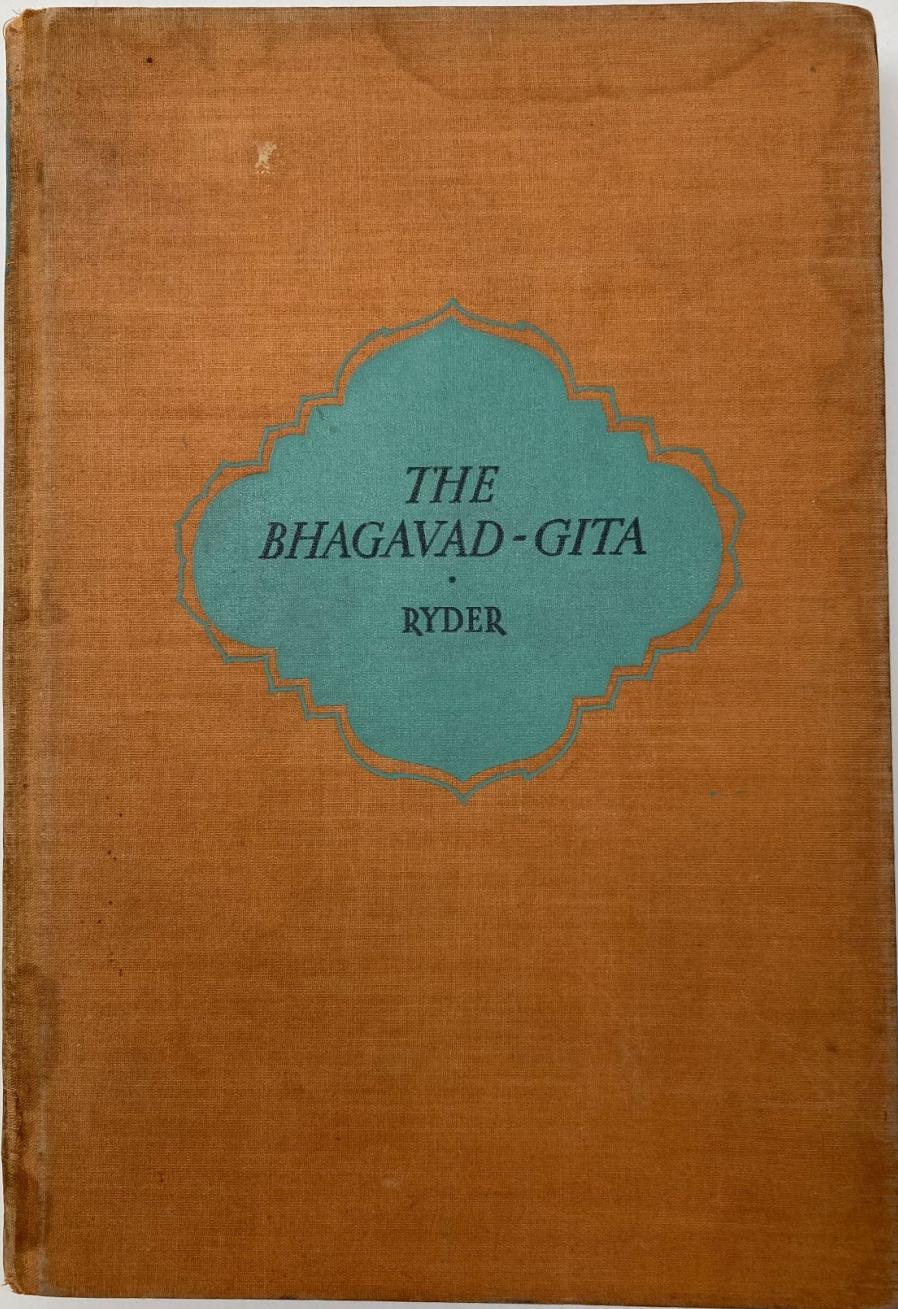
- Visit the NSRC’s new [Oppenheimer website](#). Here you’ll find rare audio of Oppenheimer, and clues as to why Oppenheimer didn’t ever win a Nobel Prize, among other related stories and photos.
- Listen to the NSRC’s podcast, *Relics*, which includes an episode discussing [the Fat Man bomb manual’s rediscovery](#).
- Interested in NSRC collections, green or otherwise? Tell us your favorite Oppenheimer item online. Email us at nsrc@lanl.gov.



J. Robert Oppenheimer's green chair, which is regularly loaned to museums nationwide for display.

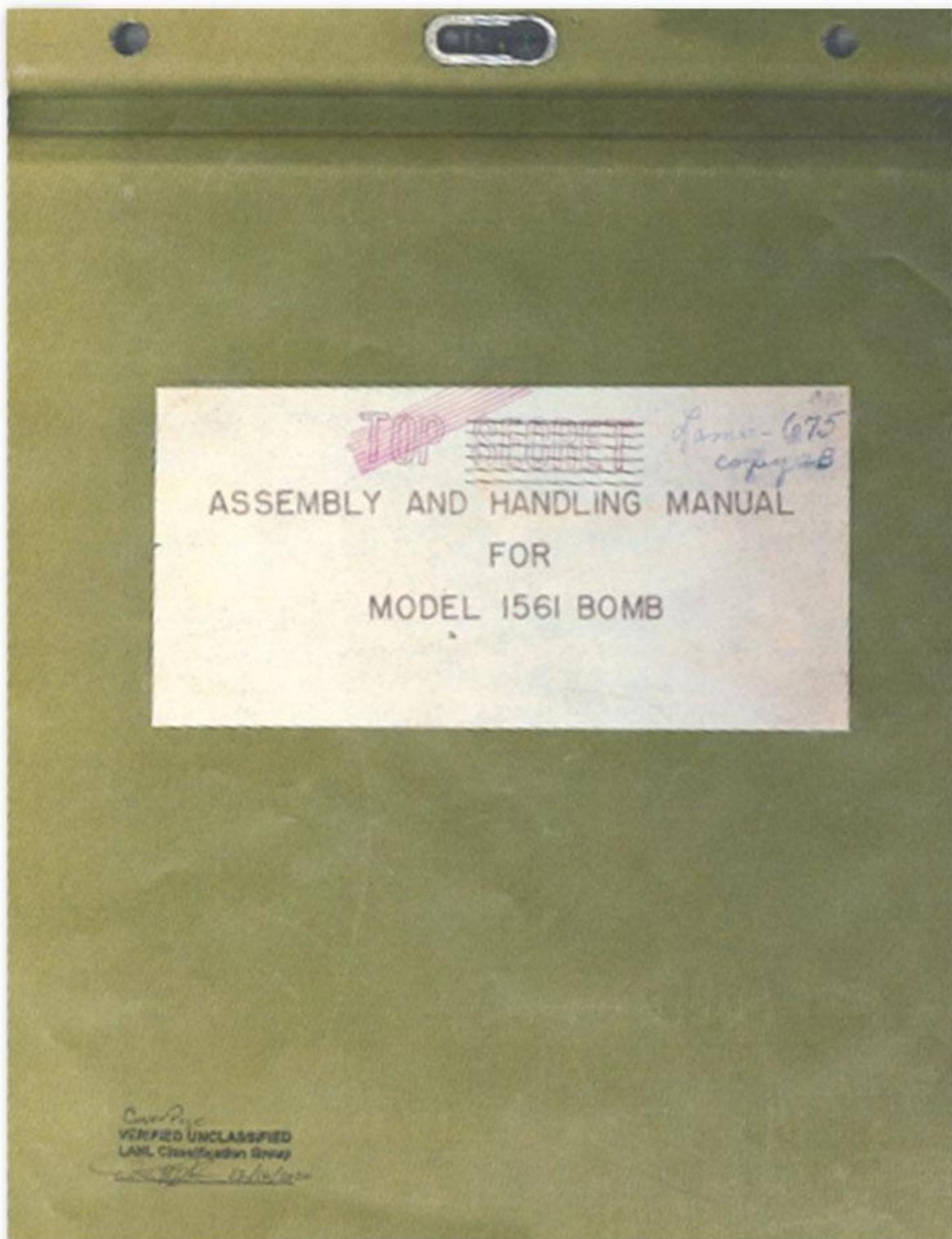


Katharine “Kitty” Oppenheimer, whose name is printed on the card with a four-leaf clover taped to it. The card was found in her spouse’s copy of the *Bhagavad Gita*.



THE
BHAGAVAD-GITA
RYDER

J. Robert Oppenheimer's copy of the *Bhagavad Gita*. A four-leaf clover was found pressed inside.



Only recently rediscovered, this step-by-step classified manual is 149 pages and includes detailed drawings of the Fat Man atomic bomb. Its contents are classified, but its (green) cover is not.

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