**O range Keystone Tour Facts:** *Palmer Lab*

* **Palmer Physical Laboratory** is now known as **Frist Campus Center,** the current center for student life on campus.
* The building used to be the home of the **Physics Department** at Princeton.
  + During World War II, nearly **75% of Princeton physicists** were a part of the **Manhattan Project** that was responsible for the development of weapons involved in the **bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.**
  + The basement used to house a **cyclotron,** which was used to induce radioactivity by accelerating matter to extremely high speeds.
  + While the faculty was extremely involved in nuclear research, many of the students were **completely oblivious** to the groundbreaking research taking place.
* The Physics Department was heavily involved in **military research and contracts,** as recalled by **Professor of Physics Emeritus George Reynolds** in a 1996 interview**.** 
  + Reynolds himself was present during the **preparation of the B29 bomber** carrying the atomic bomb that was dropped on **Nagasaki.**
  + He was originally scheduled to **fly on that plane** before a change of plans, reflecting that “in a way” he **regretted not being on the flight.**
  + The magnets used at Princeton, which are currently housed in Jadwin Hall, were **called for use at Los Alamos.**
  + In the words of Reynolds, while other schools played up their participation in the Manhattan Project, **“Princeton didn’t push itself, but [was] very key.”**
* In the late 1940’s, Princeton was the home of the **Army Atomic Energy Training Program**, which was meant to familiarize military officers with atomic physics.
  + This course was taught in **Palmer Physical Laboratory** by **George Reynolds**
  + From Reynolds: **“It wasn’t a question of good or evil, it was a question of survival.”**
* Three Princeton professors met with New Jersey Senator Smith to participate in a radio precept in 1945, titled **“The Age of Atomic Energy.”** Discussion topics included **separation of U-235 and U-238**, **impacts of Princeton’s research**, and the **future of atomic technology.**
  + This preceptorial included Sen. Howard A. Smith, Prof. of Physics Henry D. Smyth, Prof. of Politics John F. Sly, and Prof. of Politics William S. Carpenter.
  + Prof. Smyth articulated that there were exaggerations about the effects of the bombs dropped in Japan, which included **“long term poisoning of the ground”** and **“damaging effects of bomb radiations extending far beyond the area of the blast itself.”**
  + In discussions of how to handle the issues of nuclear proliferation, Sen. Smith voiced worries about **“hampering the free scope of scientific research and discovery”** in the face of governmental controls.
* Despite this extensive and storied history, Palmer’s past is merely alluded to on a few plaques inside of Frist. As an institution, it is clear that some attempt needs to be made to reckon with the past, and displaying and acknowledging this history would be a good foundation to *break the entrenched cycle of obliviousness*.



