



Smithsonian Associates

J. Robert Oppenheimer: Genius, Tragedy, Ethics, and the First Atomic Bomb

Clay Jenkinson

Tuesday, April 11, 2023 - 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. ET

A Robert Oppenheimer Timeline

- 1904 Born New York City
- 1921 Graduates Ethical High School NYC
- 1922 First visit to the mountains of New Mexico and Colorado enrolls at Harvard
- 1925 Graduates from Harvard with top honors works at Cavendish Lab at Cambridge, UK
- 1926-27 University of Cambridge; University of Gottingen
- 1927 Ph.D. in physics Gottingen
- 1929-47 Joint appointments at Berkeley and Cal Tech
- 1930 Cockroft and Watson split the atom
- 1932 James Chadwick discovers the neutron
- 1938 Hahn and Strassmann publish paper describing atomic fission
- 1939 Leo Szilard confirms the possibility of chain reaction
- 1940 JRO marries Katherine Puening Harrison
- 1943-45 Director of the Manhattan Project, Los Alamos
- 1945 July 16—first atomic bomb test, Alamogordo, successful
- 1945 Hiroshima and Nagasaki
- 1946 receives Presidential medal of merit
- 1947 Named director of the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton
- 1947-52 Chairman, General Advisory Committee, Atomic Energy Commission
- 1954 Security clearance revoked
- 1963 Received Enrico Fermi award from the Kennedy-Johnson administration
- 1967 Dies at Princeton, NJ

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Books by Clay Jenkinson

The Language of Cottonwoods: Essays on the Future of North Dakota

Bring Out Your Dead: The Literature and History of Epidemics

*Message on the Wind: A Spiritual Odyssey
on the Northern Plains*

*The Writings of the Lewis & Clark Expedition
in North Dakota*

*Becoming Jefferson's People: Re-Inventing
The American Republic in the 21st Century*

*A Free and Hardy Life: Theodore Roosevelt's
Sojourn in the American West*

*The Character of Meriwether Lewis: Explorer
in the Wilderness*

Listening to America is Clay Jenkinson's new initiative to make a series of journeys in search of the heart of America at this perplexing time in our history. Please visit ltamerica.org for more details. Meanwhile, if you have an Airstream trailer you are not using (face it!), please consider donating it to Listening to America. Our first field trip (just ended): Water and the West: The West Runs Dry.

-Clay

A Few Books about Oppenheimer and the Atomic Bomb:

Mark Wolverton. *A Life in Twilight: The Final Years of J. Robert Oppenheimer.*

Kai Bird & Martin Sherwin. *American Prometheus: The Triumph & Tragedy of J. Robert Oppenheimer.*

James Kunetka and Malcolm Hillgartner. *The General and the Genius: Groves and Oppenheimer - The Unlikely Partnership That Built the Atom Bomb.*

Richard Rhodes. *The Making of the Atomic Bomb.*

Peter Goodchild. *J. Robert Oppenheimer: Shatterer of Worlds.*

Listen to the Thomas Jefferson Hour, Clay's weekly podcast about the life and vision of the Third President of the United States. See Jeffersonhour.com for details.

Clay is the editor of *We Proceeded On*, the quarterly journal of the Lewis & Clark Expedition. You should subscribe: www.lewisandclark.org.

Clay lectures throughout the United States about the future of the humanities in higher education. His company is known as **The Erasmus Group**. Clay believes that much of the current collapse of American norms is related to the loss of humanities education.

Clay performs a one-man show called **Shakespeare without Tears** throughout the United States. The purpose is to show a: that Shakespeare is not nearly so intimidating as he might seem; b: that today is the best time since the Elizabethan era to appreciate Shakespeare. This highly entertaining show is not just for English majors!

Clay is a writer, public humanities scholar, editor, public radio personality, adventurer, leader of cultural tours. He lives in Bismarck, North Dakota, one of the last agrarian places in America. He has a particular interest in the American West.

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