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Record Documents:

Start Pg	Doc Type	Doc Date	Title	Box	Package
1	MEMO	4/2/1993	EARLY S-SITE HISTORY C. COURTRIGHT INTERVIEW (TA-54 AND TA-16) CLS-ER/BM-93:021 N/A N/A	1574	

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Los Alamos

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memorandum

Chemical and Laser Science Division
Environmental Restoration Program

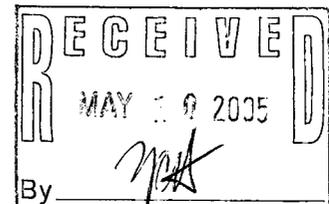
To/MS: OU 1082 Files, CLS-DO
From/MS: ~~OU 1082 Team~~ B Martin and D. Hickmott
Phone/FAX: 7-8752/5-4632
Symbol: CLS-ER/BM-93:021
Date: April 2, 1993

Subject: EARLY S-SITE HISTORY. C. COURTRIGHT INTERVIEW

This memorandum outlines a discussion with Mr. C. Courtright on April 1, 1993 that occurred in the TA-35-268 conference room. The interview lasted from 9:00 A.M. to 11:30 A.M. OU 1082 Team Members Brad Martin, Donald Hickmott, Elroy Miller, Dorothy Hoard, Margo Buksa, Don Palmer, and Linda Nonno attended. Mr. Courtright worked for Laboratory Industrial Safety Group HS-3. He was the Laboratory HE safety officer and was stationed at S-Site from 1960 to 1984. He was the safety engineer for WX and M Division. Mr. Courtright arrived at Los Alamos in 1955, but was stationed at S-Site until 1960.

Mr. Courtright discussed issues pertaining to the cleanup of the WWII explosive processing areas during the 1960s. The following information may be pertinent to the information of DQOs and sampling plans:

- 1) The rationale for cleaning up the WWII area was the Laboratory's desire to remove the outdated and replaced structures from 'the books' and return them to the A.E.C. The A.E.C. would only accept 'clean' buildings, so the HE-contaminated buildings at S-Site had to be decontaminated. The decision was made to decontaminated them by burning, excavation of utilities, and backfilling. All buildings and magazines were burned or flashed.
- 2) The procedure for burning involved loading trash into the structure, saturation of the materials with diesel, and burning each under the supervision of the fire department. Burning occurred when snow was on the ground to minimize the potential for spreading the fire.
- 3) Courtright estimated that unburned materials would have included asbestos shingles and possibly small amounts of lead. Lead would have been more prevalent at T Site. All of the uncombusted materials were taken to Area P and TA-54. Nothing was sent to be salvaged.
- 4) Subsurface drainlines were excavated by hand. Foundations and subsurface piping were carefully broken up and removed to Area P and TA-54. HE-contaminated pipes were steam-cleaned at TA-16-400 before being taken to TA-54.
- 5) Soils beneath the cleaned structures were decontaminated to the 3 wt. % HE level, based on analyses performed at TA-16-460. Most contamination was found in and around broken drainlines or sumps, always within 20 ft of structures. Particularly high concentrations were found at sump-pipe connections. Some sumps had several pipes; when one was plugged another replaced it. Most drainlines were French drains; these did not daylight. Soil contamination extended to a maximum depth of 2-3 ft. below the level of the sumps and drains.



Courtright also discussed specific activities that occurred in individual buildings. These included:

TA-16-25: Courtright confirmed that this was a rest house. However, he also stated that rest houses HE-exposing activities, such as unpacking HE.

TA-16-27: The existence of HE 'stalagmites' in the ducts was confirmed. This structure is considered by Courtright to be the most extensively contaminated building remaining.

TA-16-30 Line: To Courtright's knowledge this line was at the existing ground level of the day.

TA-16-38: This building was used for experimental casting. It may have contained pressing equipment, based on the presence of thick cement walls and floor. Pressing was done remotely. Its sump (10-15 ft deep) contained the largest amount of HE found in any structure during the cleanup (> 700 lbs.).

TA-16-66: Stated to be a rest house.

TA-16-83: Stated to be a rest house.

TA-16-84: Stated to be a rest house.

TA-16-86: Stated to be a rest house.

TA-16-88: Currently used to store radioactive materials associated with NTS activities.

TA-16-89-93: Courtright stated that no machining occurred in this line after 1960. The buildings were used to store HE-contaminated materials such as wooden shipping and storage boxes.

TA-16-91: During the 1960s and 1970s this structure was used for HE machine tool disassembly and reassembly.

TA-16-92: During the 1960s and 1970s this structure contained a tank of DMSO that was used for decontamination of machine tools. Spent DMSO was sent to the burning ground for burning.

TA-16-390: This building is estimated to be one of the three most highly contaminated buildings still existing at S-Site.

TA-16-515: This structure at V-Site once contained an extensive boracitol machining/casting operation. Fat Man components were cast at V-Site. An outfall to the south of this facility contained stressed vegetation during the 1950s and 1960s. Courtright considers this to be one of the most contaminated buildings standing on site.

TA-16-561(?): This specific tank has been removed.

Courtright confirmed, in general terms, the known activities in a number of other facilities, but did not provide specific new information. He also provided the names of a number of individuals to contact concerning S-Site activities.