Collection Summary
Title: Robert R. Furman Papers
Span Dates: 1944-1985
ID No.: MSS85571
Creator: Furman, Robert R., 1915-2008
Extent: 350 items
Extent: 1 container
Extent: .4 linear feet
Language: Collection material in English
Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
LC Catalog record: https://lccn.loc.gov/mm2010085571
Summary: Civil engineer and United States Army officer. Correspondence, memoranda, diary notes, interviews and writings, notes and notebooks, and miscellaneous items relating to Furman’s service with the Manhattan Project during World War II.

Selected Search Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

People

Organizations
Indianapolis (Cruiser)
Manhattan Project (U.S.)
United States. Army. Corps of Engineers. Manhattan District.
United States. War Department. Alsos Mission.

Subjects
Atomic bomb--Germany.
Atomic bomb--United States.
Nuclear weapons--Research--Germany.
Nuclear weapons--Research--United States.
World War, 1939-1945--Military intelligence.
World War, 1939-1945--Science.
World War, 1939-1945.

Places
Tinian (Northern Mariana Islands)

Occupations
Army officers.
Civil engineers.

Provenance
The papers of Robert R. Furman, civil engineer and United States Army officer, were given to the Library of Congress by Furman’s son, David E. Furman, in 2010.
Copyright Status
The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of Robert R. Furman is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions
The papers of Robert R. Furman are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Preferred Citation
Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, Robert R. Furman Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note
Robert R. Furman, born Aug. 21, 1915, graduated from Trenton (N.J.) High School, 1932, and the school of engineering, Princeton University, Princeton, N.J., 1937. In 1940, Furman joined the United States Army Corps of Engineers, Manhattan District, and in 1942 was assigned to the office of Leslie M. Groves, the military director of the Manhattan Project, the Allied effort to develop an atomic bomb during World War II. In 1944, Furman was attached to the Alsos Mission, an intelligence operation conducted to investigate German nuclear capabilities. Furman delivered nuclear components on board the Indianapolis (cruiser) to Tinian Island for final assembly of the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima, Japan, 1945. After the war, Furman traveled to Japan to interview Japanese scientists to examine the state of that country’s nuclear program. Furman died in 2008.

Scope and Content Note
The papers of Robert R. Furman (1915-2008) span the years 1944-1985 and consist of correspondence, memoranda, diary notes, interviews and writings, notes and notebooks, and miscellaneous material. The collection contains material relating to Furman’s service with the Manhattan Project, the code name for the Allied effort during World War II to develop the first atomic bomb. In July 1945, Furman was instructed to transfer the most crucial element of the bomb, a sub-critical mass of uranium 235, from the project’s research laboratory at Los Alamos, New Mexico, to its final assembly point on Tinian Island in the Pacific. Furman’s diary notes and post-mission interviews and writings cast light on the details of the highly secretive transport that culminated with the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima, Japan, on August 6, 1945, by the B-29 aircraft Enola Gay. The collection includes memoranda and retrospective material concerning the Indianapolis (cruiser), the United States Navy ship used to transfer the nuclear component and one of the last naval vessels sunk by enemy action, four days after its delivery to Tinian.

The papers also address Furman’s participation in the Alsos Mission, an intelligence operation associated with the Manhattan District, designed to gather information regarding Germany’s nuclear weapons program, seize German strategic materials and resources, and interrogate scientific and research personnel. The papers contain a file of diary notes, writings, and miscellaneous items concerning the mission.

Arrangement of the Papers
This collection is arranged alphabetically by topic and type of material.
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