

'Typical American community' destroyed at Test Site



*This house on Yucca Flat was destined for destruction. To the left of the house is the tower holding the nuclear device.
LANL photo.*

On May 5, 1955 a 29-kiloton device named "Apple II" was detonated from a 500-foot tower on Yucca Flat.

It was the second nationally televised nuclear test associated with an extensive civil effects program. The first shot was "Annie" on March 17, 1953. Annie was part of a civil effects test named Operation Cue, conducted by the Federal Civil Defense Administration (FCDA).

The FCDA completed 40 separate projects in Operation Cue. All were designed to evaluate the effects of nuclear detonations on civilian communities and to test the emergency response capabilities of Civil Defense organizations.

The FCDA constructed "a typical American community" complete with houses, utility stations, automobiles, furniture, appliances, food, and even mannequins simulating the people who might live in the town.

The houses were constructed of different materials with varied exteriors, and were heavily instrumented. Fresh food was flown in from San Francisco and Chicago and placed with the mannequins in kitchens and dining rooms throughout the test area.

Today, only the shells of two houses remain, one of brick and one wood frame building; all other structures were destroyed by the explosive force of the test.

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American-made automobiles with mannequins in place were positioned at various distances and angles from ground zero to measure effects of the nuclear test.

LANL photo.



These mannequins depicting a "typical American family" were placed in a shelter by the Federal Civil Defense Administrations Civil Effects Test Group to assess the possible impacts of nuclear detonations on civilian populations.

LANL photo.



17, 1953, destroyed this house in less than three seconds. In this photo, the house located 3,500 feet from ground zero is illuminated by the blast.

EG&G photo.



This photo documents total destruction of the house. The camera shot 24 frames per second, and was completely enclosed in a two-inch lead sheath to protect it from radiation. The only source of light was from the detonation.

EG&G photo.



This photo shows the house on fire. These photos were taken from clips of a film made by a 35-mm Mitchell camera set up six feet from the doomed structure. EG&G photo.



A mannequin sits in a simulated shelter, located in one of the houses built in Yucca Flat for the 29-kiloton "Apple II" test on May 5, 1955. Skeleton structures of the wooden and brick houses are all that remain today, a stark testimony to the awesome forces of the nuclear age.

LANL photo.

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