***History of Oppenheimer before the Manhattan Project.***

* Oppenheimer was the son of a German immigrant who had made his fortune by importing textiles in New York City. During his undergraduate studies at Harvard University, Oppenheimer excelled in Latin, Greek, physics, and chemistry, published poetry, and studied Eastern philosophy.
* After graduating in 1925, he sailed for England to do research at the Cavendish Laboratory at the University of Cambridge, which, under the leadership of Lord Ernest Rutherford, had an international reputation for its pioneering studies on atomic structure. At the Cavendish, Oppenheimer had the opportunity to collaborate with the British scientific community in its efforts to advance the cause of atomic research.
* Max Born invited Oppenheimer to the University of Göttingen, where he met other prominent physicists, such as Niels Bohr and P.A.M. Dirac, and where, in 1927, he received his doctorate. After short visits at science centers in Leiden and Zürich, he returned to the United States to teach physics at the University of California at Berkeley and the California Institute of Technology.
* In the 1920s the new quantum and relativity theories were engaging the attention of science. That mass was equivalent to energy and that matter could be both wavelike and corpuscular carried implications seen only dimly at that time.
* Oppenheimer’s early research was devoted in particular to energy processes of subatomic particles, including electrons, positrons, and cosmic rays. He also did groundbreaking work on neutron stars and black holes. Since quantum theory had been proposed only a few years before, the university post provided him with an excellent opportunity to devote his entire career to the exploration and development of its full significance.
* In addition, he trained a whole generation of U.S. physicists, who were greatly affected by his qualities of leadership and intellectual independence.

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