Arthur Holly Compton Encyclopedia Article

Arthur Holly Compton

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Arthur Holly Compton

1892-1962

American physicist who was awarded the 1927 Nobel Prize for Physics for discovering the Compton effect—shifts in x-ray wavelength due to scattering. His quantum theoretical explanation of this phenomenon and derivation of equations for predicting scattered wavelengths confirmed the particle-wave duality of electromagnetic radiation. Throughout the 1930s Compton conducted extensive research on cosmic radiation, which helped establish that at least some cosmic rays are charged particles. He was one of the leaders in developing the atomic bomb during World War II.