Willard Frank Libby Encyclopedia Article

Willard Frank Libby

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Willard Frank Libby

1908-1980

American chemist who received the 1960 Nobel Prize for Chemistry for developing the technique of carbon-14 dating. As a member of the Manhattan Project, Libby helped develop a method of separating uranium isotopes, a critical step in the creation of the atomic bomb. After completing this project, he and a group of his students devised the carbon-14 method for dating organisms as old as 50,000 years. His technique measures small amounts of radiation in carbon-based organisms, and became widely used by archaeologists and anthropologists for dating artifacts.