

# **The Manhattan Project National Historical Park potential sites at Hanford, WA**

**(As published in *The Oak Ridger's Historically Speaking* column on August 25, 2014)**

On July 21, 2014, Fanny and I journeyed to Hanford, WA, to explore the future Manhattan Project National Historical Park potential sites there. I had explored the Los Alamos, NM, potential sites and the Los Alamos National Laboratory potential sites last year. So, Hanford was the last of the three sites (Oak Ridge is also one of the sites) and I wanted to understand what the park would consist of there.

We also were able to include a short vacation trip where we explored a few national parks. Included in our list was the one that has on my “bucket list” for several years, Yosemite National Park!

Returning to the subject of the Manhattan Project National Historical Park, the bill for creating the park passed the United States House of Representatives on May 22, 2014, when it was included in the National Defense Authorization Act of 2015. Representative “Doc” Hastings and his colleagues Ben Ray Lujan, a New Mexico Democrat, and Chuck Fleischmann, our own Tennessee Republican representative, moved the legislation through the House.

It is good to see bipartisan support and it is great to see our own Representative Chuck Fleischmann taking a lead role. I am forever grateful to him for making it possible for me to testify in the U.S. House of Representatives last year when the bill was being considered in committee there.

It was a wonderful experience. Helen Hardin, Congressman Fleischman’s Senior Policy Advisor, arranged for some very exciting tours for me during that trip that included a behind the scenes tour of the Library of Congress including an opportunity to photograph the capital from the dome of the Library of Congress!

Mayor Beehan was in Washington DC when the bill was being considered this year and he testified in both the House and Senate hearings for Oak Ridge. He also testified at the earlier hearings last year in the Senate.

The bill now must pass the Senate. We hope that will be the case later this year.

Efforts are underway by the staff members of the senators of the three sites to find the best method to pass the bill. Senator Alexander’s staff as well as Senator Maria Cantwell of Washington have both contacted me for assistance as we work through the process. Jennifer Ziegler, of Senator Cantwell’s staff contacted me last week regarding the version of the bill being created. She was interested in how we might assure that all three sites could agree on the wording of the bill.

So, getting a chance to see exactly what was potentially to be included in the park at the Hanford Site was a good next step for me. Besides, I had wanted to tour the B-Reactor for some time now and it rounded out my understanding of just how the three sites, Hanford, Los Alamos and Oak Ridge were similar and how we differed.

I was also privileged to be asked to make a presentation on the history of Oak Ridge at the Richland Public Library while I was there to tour the Hanford Site. The auditorium of the library was full (they had to bring in extra chairs!). The presentation was scheduled for Monday evening at 6:30 PM. Our flight was turned around about 30 minutes outside of Minneapolis, MN, and we were delayed for three hours while they changed airplanes. I arrived at the presentation 15 minutes before the start time! Whew!!

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The presentation was covered by the local television station and has been posted online. You can see it at: <http://richlandwa.swagit.com/play/07232014-990>

It was good to meet several people who attended the presentation there in Richland that had stories to tell of their work at the Hanford Site. Their stories struck me as being so very similar to our own experiences in Oak Ridge.

Our oral histories are online at

<http://cdm16107.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/landingpage/collection/p15388coll1> and the Atomic Heritage Foundation's Voices of the Manhattan Project <http://manhattanprojectvoices.org/>. The tremendous value of these firsthand accounts just cannot be estimated.

The video interviews can be used to create excellent documentary films. Such films will enable our history to live on for the next generations and will be exceptional teaching tools for our schools where the history of the Manhattan Project may not often be included very effectively in the curriculum.

Two others from Oak Ridge also went on the trip to tour the Hanford Site. They were delayed leaving Knoxville and missed a Dallas, TX, connection and did not arrive in Richland, WA, until late Monday night. So, it could have been worse for me, I could have taken the same flights they did!

On Tuesday, we started early at the location where the B Reactor public tours start. There was a group taking the public tour already gathering when we arrived. They were assembled in the room where the orientation is given to each tour before they embark on the journey to see the "B" Reactor. Excellent photographs lined the walls. Wonder who their "Ed Westcott" was who made all their photos?

We were met by Russel J. Fabre, the B-Reactor Tour Manager and Kirk D. Christensen, Manager, B-Reactor Preservation Project. Colleen French, DOE RL, arranged for this visit. She set up the tour of the site to include the B-Reactor and also arranged for meetings where we could learn more about the public tours as well as other historic preservation activities being worked at Hanford.

These arrangements were exceptionally helpful. Colleen also arranged for us to visit the Hanford High School building at old Hanford, the bank building at old White Bluffs, the Bruggemann ranch structure and the historic 1908 Hanford Irrigation Project Pump House on the river's edge where we had lunch.

We also toured the Hanford REACH Interpretive Center while there. Hilferty Museum Planning and Exhibit Design, the company who has the contract with DOE EM here in Oak Ridge for the design of the K-25 History Center at the East Tennessee Technology Park's Heritage Center, has just completed the design and installation of a portion of the REACH center.

I wanted to see that to get a better feel for the type work they have done. I was pleased with what I saw. Karen Doughty, DOE EM's person responsible for the historic preservation of K-25, went with us.

She and Colin Colverson, DOE OR person with lead responsibility for the Manhattan Project National Historical Park here in Oak Ridge also went with us on the trip to Hanford. They both toured the site with Fanny and me on Tuesday and attending meetings later in the week to better comprehend how the Hanford Site is progressing with historic preservation.

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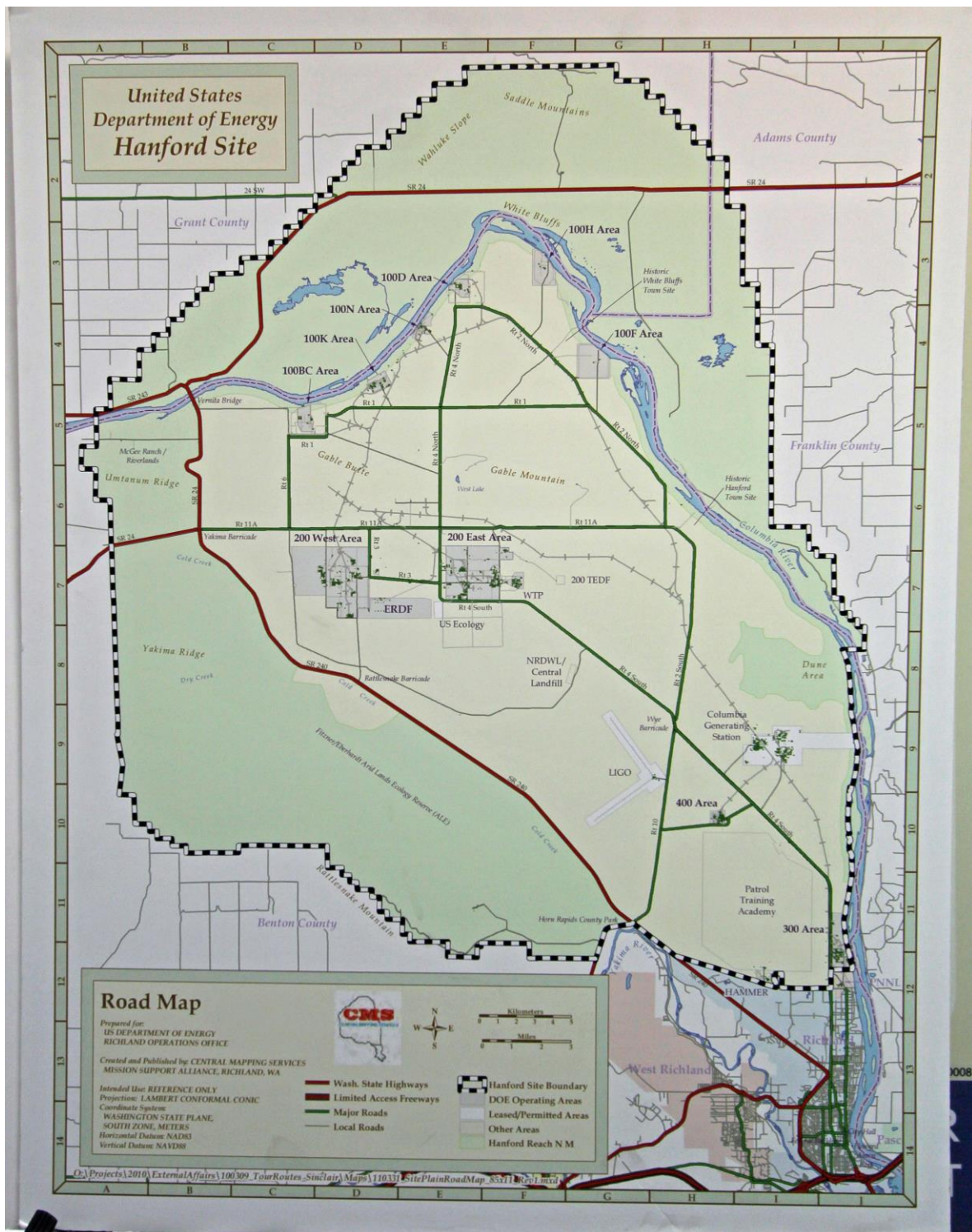
In the next *Historically Speaking* column we will take you on a tour of the huge 586 square mile Hanford Site. We will see the B Reactor up close, and we will see historic remains of the old towns of Hanford and White Bluffs.



Building in Richland, WA, where the B Reactor public tours start

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A map of the 586 square mile Hanford Site

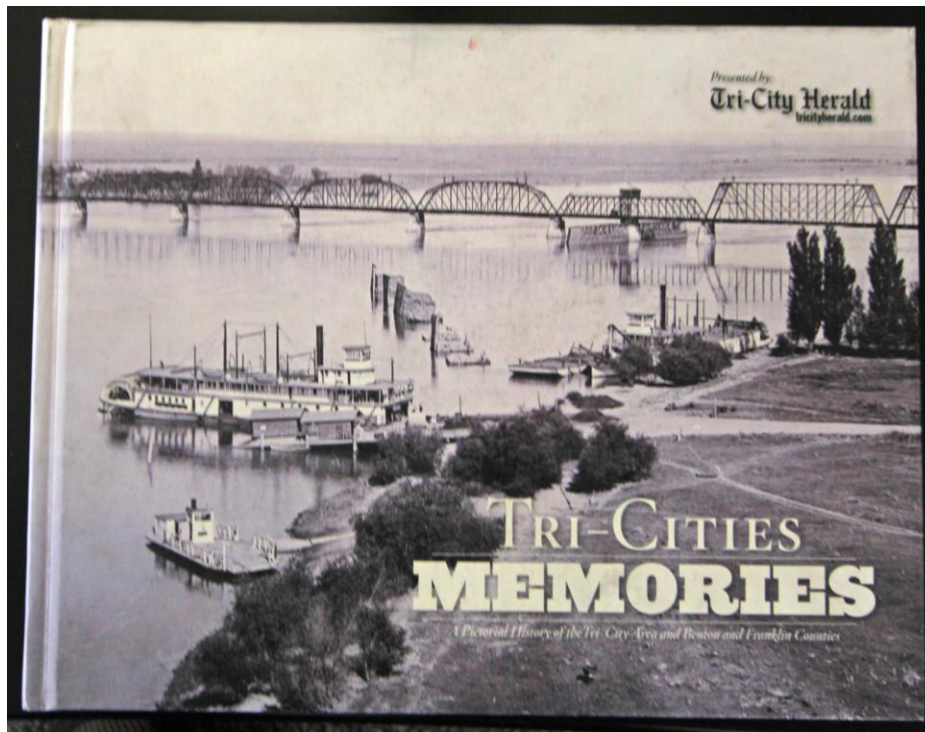


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The room where the B Reactor public tours begin and where the initial introduction to the event is presented – notice the historic photos on the wall that were made by Robley Johnson, Hanford's "Ed Westcott"



A photo book of the historic Tri-Cities area (Kennewick, Richland and Pasco) of Benton and Franklin Counties