

Evicted!!

Well it finally happened! We were asked to leave our campground, a few days earlier than we planned, due to the many requests of members wanting to come in during the 4th of July weekend. We really didn't mind as we had had a nice long stay. Summer time is when many members with young families come to the park for their vacations. When it gets busy, they enforce the rule of 'first in - first out'. We spent the early part of June trying to stay cool, and getting the coach and ourselves ready to move North. In between, we took some time to visit Ripley's Aquarium there in Myrtle Beach. This place is well worth seeing and a great experience. You actually walk through a tunnel with transparent walls with and all kinds of fish swimming along side and above you. I only wish we had gone earlier in the season because the noise level with so many children present was unreal! That night the aquarium was to have a sleep over for kids in the tunnel. What a great experience for them.

Well, before the end of June, Bob & I were *on the road again*. That's a song Willie Nelson sings, isn't it? Because of this early departure, it was possible to stumble across a new and fascinating place. We came to the town known as Oak Ridge in TN. This will take us back in time to WWII when the US entered the war. My research discovered that this town was built in about a nine month period in 1942, but never existed on any maps, and was virtually unknown until after the Cold War. This town was built by the US Government for the purpose of building the atomic bomb. It was one of three such secret sites. The other two were in Richland, WA, and Los Alamos, NM. This is an incredible story which, until this trip, we knew nothing about. As I attempted to find out how to go about touring, I began to think this area still suffers from 'the secrecy syndrome'. Information was somewhat fragmented, and no really good local maps. Needless to say security was very tight at the time, and still is since 9/11. The area was picked because it was quite isolated, and had a good source of energy with hydro electric power. Approximately 3,000 people were asked to move with about a 3 week notice. The original estimate of needing about 13,000 workers in residence became more like 75,000 in reality. Many people had to live in nearby towns and communities for lack of space. None of the people working on site or people living nearby knew what was being done there until the war was over! Only then did they realize that they contributed to the creation of the bombs that ended the war. Today Oak Ridge continues as a Mecca for scientific and technological innovations. The Oak Ridge National Laboratory has a staff of 4,200 researchers supporting the Department of Energy.

We spent the first part of our visit at the *American Museum of Science and Energy*, located in town. We probably spent a good three hours here learning about the development of the town of Oak Ridge, the atomic

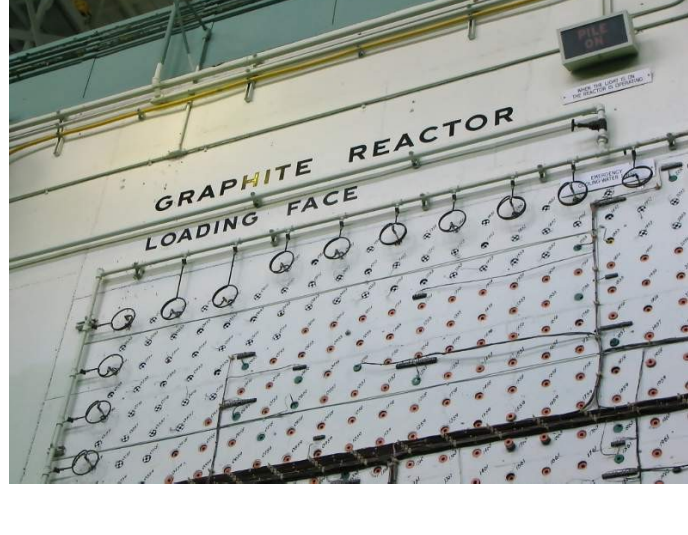
While on line, I discovered that there was a bus tour that took people to the graphite reactor, the Y-12 visitor center, and other sites that would be otherwise restricted to visitors. We could have missed this tour as it wasn't widely advertised. It was the best part of the whole experience. The tour director was a retired engineer, who had worked in the complex. He was quite knowledgeable, to say the least. The shuttle bus would only take 20 people and in order to get on the tour you had to go to the museum, early the day of the tour, to get your name on the list. They checked everyone's ID. Page two has some good pictures of that tour. When we visited the Y-12 visitor's center, one of their people took over with a presentation and film. There were some old pictures of the original town, which were great. The government actually thought to document the whole process by appointing an Army photographer, Edward Westcott Jr. His work was outstanding, but because of the secrecy of the project, he was not given due recognition until way after the war. Most of the original buildings have been torn down and are still being torn down to make room for more modern facilities to continue research by government and private companies. While at Y-12 we were given a bundle of printed information as well as four CDs on history and future use of Y-12. One interesting piece of information is that 40 years before this secret town was conceived, a local man John Hendrix, who was referred to as a 'mystic' by local people, made a public prophecy that huge buildings and factories would be built in the valley some day and the valley would play a huge role in ending the greatest war of all times. Everyone talks about this legend of a man and is considered true. Amazing! I was really interested in locating the original guest house that housed all the famous scientists that participated. Among those who stayed here were Albert Einstein and Robert Oppenheimer, (father of the atomic bomb). These men stayed here under fictitious names because of the secrecy of the project. I was disappointed to see the building was abandoned, and falling apart. This is a restoration project waiting for someone to adopt it. It has been closed since 1980. Other areas were the original shopping area, Jackson Square. This is alive and well, and mostly in it's original state.

We also drove to the near by Norris Dam State Park.

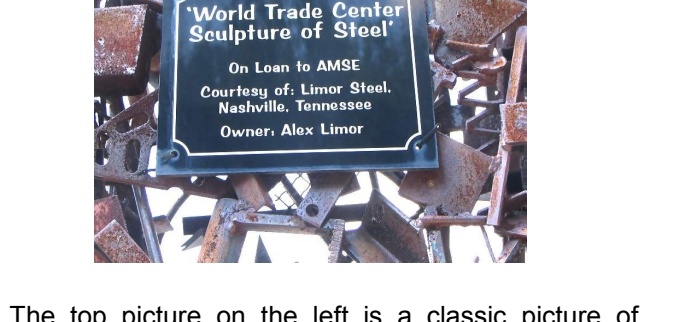
This dam is one of many belonging to the Tennessee Valley Authority, responsible for a significant amount of hydro electric power produced here. Also in Norris, was the *Museum of Appalachia*. This was conceived and built by John Rice Irwin, a descendent of original pioneers in the area. This is truly a history of a people. A web site for this is www.museumofappalachia.com. Other web sites of interest are for the Manhattan Project at www.oakridgevisitor.com, the American Museum of Science at www.amse.org, and Norris Dam State Park at www.tnstateparks.com



Oak Ridge Overlook



Symbols of War and Peace



The top picture on the left is a classic picture of women working during the Manhattan Project. They were watching gages involved in refining uranium, but never knew what it was they were doing until after the war. Second picture is of the historic graphite reactor. The third picture is our tour guide describing the process of enriching uranium. The top right picture is of the original guest house that housed the great scientists of the free world who designed the atomic bomb that ended WWII. The next three pictures are of the International Freedom Bell to the people of Japan and the last two pictures of the World Trade Center Memorial, located by the Museum