

Building 9731 tour was a huge hit

1,377 people participated in 46 tours of Y-12 on Saturday, June 19, 2010. They came from 29 states.

While we are proud of the interest shown in touring Y-12, this attendance did not set a record for a single day tour of Y-12! That record was set on September 3, 1967. On that date, 4,357 people visited Building 9737 for Y-12's very first "Open House." On Saturday, September 2, 1967, they had 2,237 visitors for a grand total for the weekend of 6,594!

These tours were walking tours to Building 9737 and the people were not taken anywhere else. The tour this past Saturday of Building 9731 also included a stop at the water tanks on Chestnut Ridge, an excellent overlook to see the site. Tour participants were also able to see an up close external view of the newly operational Highly Enriched Uranium Materials Facility and the Jack Case Center.

In 2005 we opened Building 9204-3 to the public and over 1,000 people came. The next Saturday, we had over 1,000 employees and their families who came for those tours. But nearly 1,400 in one day...wow! We were not expecting that many.

I want to extend a personal THANKS for your patience to those hundreds of people who had to wait, literally hours, just to get a seat on the few buses (we had six – all we had running) that were taking people on the one-hour tour. You were so kind and understanding while sitting in the auditorium listening to me answer questions and exchange information with some in the audience who were even more knowledgeable about Y-12 history.

It seems to me that we made the most of the opportunity to talk with each other about Y-12's history. I certainly appreciate all those who spoke up and contributed to the general increase in knowledge about Y-12's unique heritage and its valued history.

The commemorative Building 9731 postcard and the "Our Hidden Past" DVD's, both of which were completely gone early in the day, are available at the Y-12 History Center at New Hope Center. The history center is open 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM Monday through Thursday and on any other day by special request to me.

As a reminder, I am including a copy of the commemorative Building 9731 postcard at the end of this article and encouraging you to make your plans early to come see Y-12 at your next opportunity. We will again offer public tours in conjunction with the 2011 Secret City Festival. Maybe the situation will be such that we can again open the Beta 3 building as well as the Building 9731 and give tour participants a choice or they can tour both historic buildings.

We will certainly be looking at ways to improve the flow of participants to avoid extended delays next time. Thanks again for your kindness to us when we were obviously struggling to handle the overwhelming crowd. Thank you even more for sticking with us until we could figure it out and still make your tour visit a successful one.

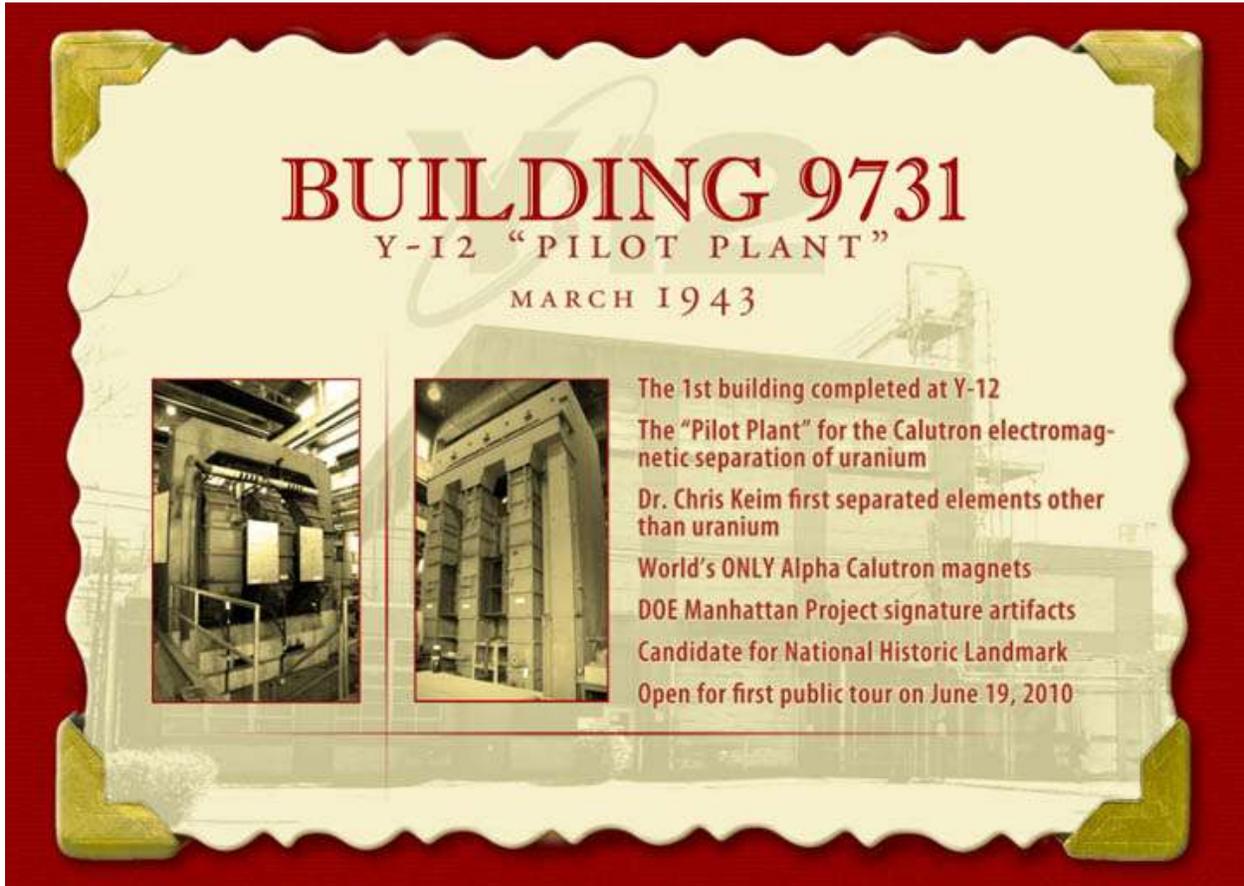
I must add a word about our Host (Martin Skinner) and Hostess (Jane Greer Puckett). They both greeted all 46 tours with enthusiasm and good humor. They shared their experiences and answered all questions.

As has been the case in the past, several of the tour participants identified themselves as having worked at Y-12 and some even had worked in Building 9731. It was a tremendous pleasure to see the workers reunited and to see the joy this tour brought to the visitors who recall fondly working at Y-12.

Even though we are obviously not ready to compete with Disney World or even Dollywood when it comes to tours, we do have some unique historic artifacts and buildings that have made history and cannot be seen at any other location. The Manhattan Project National Park Study being completed now is

recognizing the importance of the history of the coming of the atomic age and Y-12 will play a huge role in that story.

Thank you again for coming to see us on Saturday, June 19, 2010, in itself, a truly historic occasion and 1,377 of you were part of it.



Commemorative Postcard for Y-12 "Pilot Plant" or Building 9731.