

Y-12 Shift Change, famous Ed Westcott image recreated

In the Jack Case Center there is a huge 20' by 50' photographic mural that was donated to Y-12 by Turner Universal. It has become an icon, and several Y-12 employees recognize people in their family who were in the photo.

During the filming of the final episode of the miniseries, *A Nuclear Family: Y-12 National Security Complex, Lifting the veil*, which was shown on East Tennessee Public Broadcasting System, Buck Kahler, of Y-12 Photography and Video Services, was looking for the final images to conclude the miniseries.

Something was needed that would catch the eye of the viewer and would tie back to the history of the beginning of the series. Buck settled on the thought of recreating the famous "Y-12 Shift Change" photo and approached Terry Marlar, Supervisor of Digital and Photographic Services, with his idea. Buck felt this image was a good selection because it is readily recognizable as being an image of Y-12 and one that many of the viewers would have seen before.

Terry immediately saw the huge value of such an opportunity and being a good friend of Ed Westcott, the famous Manhattan Project era and Cold War era Department of Energy photographer who actually shot the original "Y-12 Shift Change" image, he wanted to involve Ed in creating this new historical image. Ed was delighted to be asked to be a part of the project. He did not realize everything Terry had in store for him, and Terry did not attempt to explain, only asking Ed and his family to be there.

Ed Westcott, now a spry 90-year-old photographer, who is still making photographs, is the primary reason for the excellence in not only the "Y-12 Shift Change" image, but many other images that are used throughout all historical videos made at Y-12 and other places where Oak Ridge history is featured. His work has appeared on television on The History Channel, Discovery Channel, local Oak Ridge and Knoxville stations, and now East TN PBS in *The Nuclear Family!* In fact, his work is seen throughout most of the episodes of this new miniseries.

One unique thing that was done in this remake of the original photo of a line of people leaving work, was to ask Ed to stand in the midst of all the other people walking. This was not readily apparent to Ed and he walked with everyone else the first time the photo was taken. He laughed when he realized what we were attempting and stood still the next time. Ed readily understood the idea and unusual photograph we wanted to create. Including Ed in this way was a collaborative creative effort initiated by Donna Griffith, Director of Communication Services.



The original Ed Westcott "Y-12 Shift Change" image with the large Buildings 9201-1 (Alpha 1) and 9201-2 (Alpha 2) in the background. The "CEW" on the signs stands for Clinton Engineer Works (not Engineering!).



The modern remake of Ed Westcott's famous "Y-12 Shift Change" image features Y-12 workers leaving the Highly Enriched Uranium Facility and includes the famous photographer standing in the midst of the workers.

Another unusual opportunity for Terry was to have Ed Westcott and Ed's son, John, who works at Y-12 there at the same time. He asked John to stand in where Ed was placed and let Ed snap the modern photo. Terry then placed the shutter release into Ed's hand and said, "We'd like for you to take another historical photo." This image, with two generations of Westcott's involved will be used in the future as we continue to use the "family" theme to promote better understanding of the history of Y-12.

As Terry orchestrated the final scene, in which workers are standing in front of the Highly Enriched Uranium Materials Facility, he took special note of where each person was positioned in the original Ed Westcott image. Among the people walking in the modern version are two offspring of individuals in the historic photo.

Nick Sharp from Facilities, Infrastructure and Services, is the grandson of Lucille Kite; and Jerry Parrett, who worked in Transportation and now works as a subcontractor, is the son of Lester Parrett, an outside machinist who appeared in the original photo. Both Nick and Jerry were excited to get to be in the remake of the famous photograph that included their ancestors.

As noted in a press release written by Carolyn Andrews, "The miniseries, which helps fulfill the National Historic Preservation Act's requirements to interpret the history of U.S. Department of Energy sites, has already won two awards. Episodes one and two were submitted to the 45th Worldfest Independent International Film Festival held in Houston, TX, in April. Both won a platinum Remi, an award that recognizes the creative genius of artist Frederic Remington."

Carolyn goes on to say, "The miniseries can be viewed online at <http://www.y12.doe.gov/about/history/video.php>, and East Tennessee PBS plans to rebroadcast the four episodes back-to-back in July. PBS is also considering airing the miniseries throughout Tennessee and possibly nationally. A DVD set will be available at the Y-12 History Center starting in June. Schools, libraries and interested individuals may request complimentary copies of the DVD set by contacting Y-12 historian Ray Smith by email (smithdr@y12.doe.gov)."