

Fairfield Glade Rotary Welcomes Guest Speaker Bill Wilcox, Jr

Fairfield Glade Rotary Club Secretary, Jack Williams was pleased to introduce Mr. William Jenkins Wilcox, Jr. to Rotary Members and their guests. Mr. Wilcox is the Oak Ridge City Historian, Chair of the Partnership for K-25 Preservation, and a Manhattan Project Veteran.



The Manhattan Project resulted in the development of the first atomic bomb. Mr. Wilcox spoke of the important roll Oak Ridge played in the ending of World War II by participating in The Manhattan Project. In 1942 Oak Ridge TN was selected due to it's low population, easy acquisition of property, accessibility to highways and rail, and the availability of water and electricity supplied by the newly completed Norris Dam. People were

recruited from all over the country to work at the facility and the city grew from approximately 3,000 people in 1942 to about 75,000 in 1945. Even though the K-25 uranium-seperating facility covered 44 acres and was at that time the largest building in the world, it was kept an official government secret and the city did not appear on any maps.

Due to the classified work being done, Oak Ridge became "The Secret City." Employees were not allowed to tell anyone where they worked, mail delivery was done through a post office in Knoxville, and workers were not allowed to talk among themselves as to what they were working on. Everything was done on a "need to know" basis. Prior to 1949, when the city received its name, it had only been referred to as the Clinton Engineer Works. Mr Wilcox affirmed that it was through hard work and a shared vision, that success was achieved and the war ended.

A long time Rotarian, Mr. Wilcox has promised a return visit to Fairfield Glade Rotary in the very near future. For information on Rotary, contact club President Paul Wennermark at 456-9209