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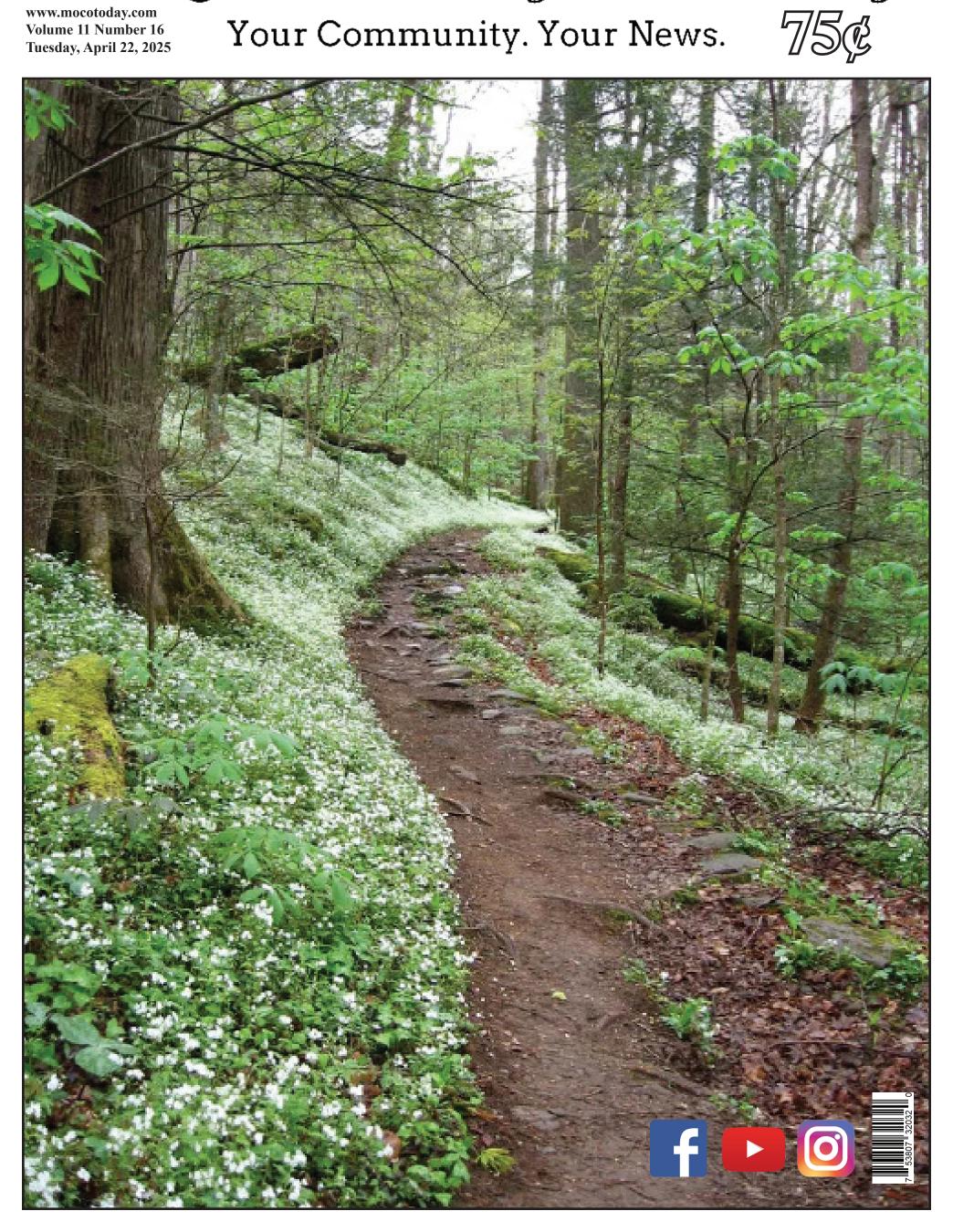


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Morgan County 📰 Today Your Community. Your News.

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Pet Perspective with Ms. Avery Pearl

I Got In T-R-O-U-B-L-E

Pet Columnist

Uncle Houston and the boys came over cause Braden was having car trouble and Pap was helping them.

Ms Ivory and me got to run around and play with them. It was fun.

I thought it would be cool to go through Ms Tammy's yard and try to sneak through the neighborhood. Well, that was a bad idea. Mimi asked them where I went. So, Pap and Nathan started to search for me.

Then it happened! I got in T-R-O-U-B-L-E when Pap spotted me. He told me to get my tail back over to our yard.

That woman keeps an eye on us and we don't get by with nothing.

So, I did what I was told and came back to the house like the good girl I am. What did I get for trying to seak off? I had to go in the house, while Ms Ivory got to visit with Houston and the boys.

I should have learned my lesson from the last time I tried to sneak off. But, nooo! I had to try it again.

Any-woof, I sure hope everyone had a good Easter.

For more of my Pet Perspective like and follow me on Facebook at Ms Avery Pearl.





The Deer Lodge Abner Ross Center meet on the third Monday of the month at 6:00 PM.

Coalfield Genealogical and Historical Society meets the second Tuesday of every month at the Senior Citizens Building at 6:00 PM.

Morgan County Republican Party meets the last Thursday of every month at 7:00 PM at the merican Legion in Wartburg.

City of Sunbright

Resolution No. 95-2025 Resolution to Create a Beautification Committee Adopted & Approved 4/15/25



HONOR YOUR HOMETOWN HERO IN SUNBRIGHT

The City of Sunbright is working on a project to honor our hometown heroes. We will be placing an 8x10 photo of your Veteran Hero in a weather-proof frame on Electric Poles throughout the city. You will supply the photo for the City to copy and place in the frame that will be special made.

The cost of each photo is \$155.00 A Form will be need to be completed which may be picked up at the City Hall . When we receive your photo and completed form, we will also need the payment at that time.

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In Loving Memory —



Jackie Jo Judkins, 58



Jackie Jo Judkins, age 58 of Sunbright passed away April 12, 2025 at Roane Medical Center. She was born January 7, 1967.

Jackie is survived by her son Matthew (Shelby) Vann; parents Herb and Patsy Judkins; sisters Keely Gunter, Kim Vespie, and Jana (Billy) Walker; grandchildren Madison and Lincoln and host of nieces, nephews, aunts, uncles and friends.

The family will have a Memorial Service on Saturday, April 26, 2025 at 2:00 p.m. at the Byrd Church with Bro. Herb Judkins officiating.

Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Jackie Jo Judkins.

Obituaries must come from a funeral home to be in the newspaper.

Psalm 86:4-5

4 Rejoice the soul of thy servant: for unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.
5 For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.



IRS extends tax deadline for Tennesseans



David Zubler Columnist

Due to the recent severe storms, the IRS extended the filing and payment deadline for Tennesseans. The new deadline is November 3, 2025, and applies to everyone in all 95 counties. You are not required to have had storm damage to qualify for the extended deadline.

"The IRS is offering relief to any area designated by the <u>Federal Emergency Management</u> <u>Agency (FEMA)</u>. This means that individuals and households that reside or have a business in Tennessee's 95 counties qualify for tax relief. The cur-

rent list of eligible localities is always available on the <u>Tax relief in disaster</u> situations page on <u>IRS.gov</u>," the IRS said.

"In addition, penalties for failing to make payroll and excise tax deposits due on or after April 2, 2025, and before April 17, 2025, will be abated if the deposits are made by April 17, 2025," the IRS said.

The new deadline applies to the following:

- Individual income tax returns and payments normally due on April 15, 2025.

- 2024 contributions to IRAs and health savings accounts for eligible taxpayers.

- Quarterly estimated tax payments normally due on April 15, June 16 and Sept. 15, 2025.

- Quarterly payroll and excise tax returns normally due on April 30, July 31 and Oct. 31, 2025.

- Calendar-year corporation and fiduciary returns and payments normally due on April 15, 2025.

- Calendar-year tax-exempt organization returns normally due on May 15, 2025.

The IRS will also work with anyone who lives outside the disaster area but whose records for filing their tax returns are in the affected area. Anyone who qualifies for this relief qualifies for this relief can contact the IRS Special Services toll-free number at <u>866-562-5227</u>.

Individuals and businesses in a federally declared disaster area who suffered uninsured or unreimbursed disaster-related losses can choose to claim them on either the return for the year the loss occurred or the return for the prior year (2024). You will have up to six months after the due date of the federal tax return for the disaster year (without regard to any extension of time to file), to make the election. For individual taxpayers, this means Oct. 15, 2026. Be sure to write the FEMA declaration number – 3625-EM – on any return claiming a loss.

Qualified disaster relief payments are generally excluded from gross income.

Additional relief may be available to affected people who participate in a retirement plan or individual retirement arrangement (IRA). For example, you may be eligible to take a special disaster distribution that would not be subject to the additional 10% early distribution tax and allows you to spread the income over three years. You may also be eligible to make a hardship withdrawal. Each plan or IRA has specific rules and guidance for its participants to follow.

Anyone who does not qualify for disaster tax relief may be eligible for reasonable cause penalty abatement.

The IRS may provide additional disaster relief in the future.

David Zubler is a nationally known tax accountant and Enrolled Agent that resides in East Tennessee. He is the author of six tax books and a syndicated columnist who has shared tax advice on podcasts and national TV and has been referred to as America's Tax Guru. He is the founder and president of Your Tax Care. He represents clients nationwide before the IRS and provides tax strategies, and tax education, including David's one-minute tax tip radio recordings at YourTaxCare.com. David can be reached at (865)363-3019 or by email at david@yourtaxcare.com.

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Historically Speaking National Historic Chemical Landmark for K-25

By Ray Smith - Oak Ridge City Historian

Thanks to Arlene Garrison and Gordon Fee for contributing to this Historically Speaking column.

On Wednesday, May 7, 2025, at 10 AM, the American Chemical Society (ACS) will recognize the K-25 Gaseous Diffusion process for separating uranium isotopes with a National Historic Chemical Landmark (NHCL) designation. The President of the American Chemical Society, with other dignitaries, will be recognizing this honor at the site. The public, including all previous K-25 employees, are invited to join the celebration.

The ceremony will be held at the East Tennessee Technology Park's Heritage Center (K-25 site) near Building K-1000 at 200 Heritage Center Blvd. and near the K-25 Atomic History Center at 652 Enrichment Street, Oak Ridge, TN. A plaque describing the "science behind enriching our world" will be unveiled. Plan to attend and experience the honor bestowed on a major part of Oak Ridge history!

Sponsors for this ceremony are:

Uranium Level (\$2000 and higher): United Cleanup Oak Ridge; American Chemical Society Local Section Innovative Program Grant; ACS National Historic Chemical Landmark Grant; East Tennessee Section ACS; ACS Industrial & amp; Engineering Chemistry Division; UT-Battelle

Tennessine level (\$1000): Oak Ridge Associated Universities; ACS Corporation Associate; ACS Nuclear Division

In-Kind: American Museum of Science and Energy; East Tennessee Economic Council; Oak Ridge National Laboratory; Explore Oak Ridge; ORAU; Ted Russell Ford

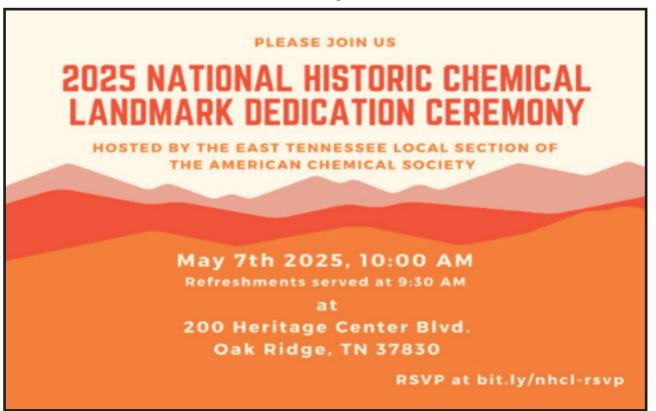
This recognition effort was started several years ago by Dub Shults, the retired director of Oak Ridge National Laboratory's Analytical Chemistry Division and an American Chemical Society Fellow. He thought uranium enrichment using gaseous diffusion was a remarkable achievement and should be remembered and recognized as a major contributor to the nuclear age. However, before he could complete the task, he passed away.

A couple of years later, Gordon Fee asked me about the effort as he had been on the small group working with Dub on the project. I told Gordon that I knew Dub's son, Steve Shults, and had worked with him at Y-12, so I would see if we could find Dub's work still on his computer. www.mocotoday.com

Katie Johnson had connections with the national ACS office, Roane State Professor Sylvia Davis had local contacts, and UT's Al Hazari had expertise in outreach.

Some non-chemists enhanced the proposal and planning team. Ray Smith and Gordon Fee provided excellent historical information, and UCOR's Jim Dunn worked with the logistics on the permanent placement of the plaque and the best location for the event. Past ACS President Diane Schmidt was an excellent resource on similar events. landmark represents the fourth designation in Tennessee. One of those four is the Landmark for Production and Distribution of Radioisotopes at Oak Ridge National Laboratory, which was dedicated in March 2008. The East Tennessee Section of the ACS is considering other potential landmarks in the area.

The mission of the NHCL program is to enhance public appreciation for the contributions of the chemical sciences to modern life in the United States. The program records histories and provides information and resources about Land-



Flyer for the National Historic Chemical Landmark ceremony on Wednesday, May 7, 2025, at 10 AM

American Museum of Science and Energy's Tony Schnadelbach hosted committee meetings and assisted with many tasks. Oak Ridge National Laboratory's Brian Anderson contributed thoughts on the ongoing development of this area of science. ORNL's Gernot Rother will serve as emcee for the event. The East Tennessee Economic Council was the gracious host of early meetings.

Contributions from Niki Nicholas of the Manhattan Project National Historical Park make this National Historic Chemical Landmark unique. Several ideas were considered as the team was contemplating long-term impact and community outreach about the K-25 National Historic Chemical Landmark.

The discussions resulted in a special Junior Ranger Program, called the Junior Ranger Chemist. Students who visit the Manhattan Project National Historical Park and finish the activity book that includes the history and chemistry of K-25 will be awarded Junior Ranger badges. In collaboration with UT-Battelle, a group of students in Morgan County, Tennessee, will be mark achievements.

A relevant ACS location section sponsors prospective ACS Landmarks. The extensive review process includes the ACS National Historic Chemical Landmarks Subcommittee. The designation and resulting summary booklet must be approved by the ACS Board Committee on Public Affairs and Public Relations, which acts on behalf of the ACS Board of Directors.

Upon designation, ACS presents a historical marker to the host organization and publishes a commemorative booklet and webpage of the achievement. In cooperation with the NHCL Program Manager, sponsors organize a ceremony to commemorate the designation. ACS provides the plaque and a small amount of funding for the event. The East Tennessee Section thanks all the donors who provided funding and in-kind services for this event.

The National Historic Chemical Landmark is awarded to those sites where groundbreaking accomplishments in the history of chemical sciences have occurred in the United States. The achievement must have provided no-

Sure enough, Steve found it!

Gordon and I then began to try and find someone who was a member of the local group of the American Chemical Society to see if we could generate interest there to continue the proposal to recognize K-25.

Oak Ridge Associated Universities retiree Arlene Garrison graciously agreed to take the lead to see if there was continued interest by the American Chemical Society. ACS is a non-profit organization founded in 1876 and chartered by the U.S. Congress, representing over 200,000 members, authors, and journal subscribers worldwide

Arlene found sufficient interest and formed a team that resubmitted the proposal and has been planning for the event for the past couple of years. Several members of the East Tennessee Local Section of the ACS brought different skills to the project. John Schroeder had an intense interest in Oak Ridge history, ORNL's

the first to complete the badge on May 15th, one week after the plaque unveiling ceremony.

The team considered several potential speakers for the plaque unveiling event. ACS President Doroty Phillips will describe the ACS Landmarks program. The Corps of Engineers will speak about the massive scale of the program, which was scaled up from early work at Columbia University. Dean Robert Mawhinney of Columbia will discuss the critical partnership between academia and industry, which led to the successful isotope separation. The future of enrichment will be addressed by Susan Hubbard, Deputy for Science and Technology at Oak Ridge National Laboratory. Ray Smith and Gordon Fee will provide history-related remarks to round out the program.

ACS National Historic Chemical Landmarks (https://www.acs.org/education/whatischemistry/landmarks.html), represent seminal achievements in the chemical sciences. The K-25 table benefits to society and the chemical profession.

There are only 90 such sites in the country. The K-25 building played a key role in providing the enriched uranium used in the first atomic bomb that helped end World War II. The building was the largest and costliest construction project undertaken during the Manhattan Project.

The construction of the building itself was gigantic, as it was the largest building under one roof in the world at that time. It has been reported that the equivalent of 28 football fields could be housed in the building. However, the real accomplishment was solving the unprecedented challenges in material science, corrosion resistance, and uranium compound handling in a very short time, and mass producing the needed materials and equipment to separate the U-235 isotopes from the heavier U-238 ones.

- Continued on page 11

Historically Speaking National Historic Chemical Landmark for K-25

By Ray Smith - Oak Ridge City Historian

Solving the challenging problems required the involvement of the best-known companies in the country, including Union Carbide, Kellex Corporation, General Electric, Westinghouse, DuPont, Allis-Chalmers, and Eastman Kodak. These companies formed an unprecedented wartime industrial partnership, applying cutting-edge applied chemistry, engineering, and metallurgy to one of the historically most secret and ambitious projects ever.

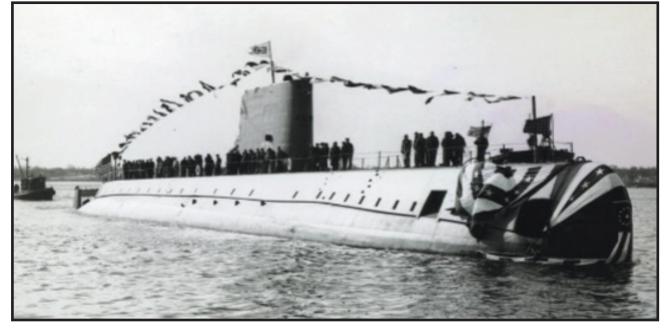
One of the many technical challenges was the need to produce a filter-like material, referred to as "barrier" material, through which the uranium must pass to separate the U-235 isotope from the U-238 isotopes. This special material took several years to develop and ultimately was the first large-scale nanostructure in the world.

Because there is so little difference in size and weight of the uranium isotopes, they are very hard to separate, like sorting basketballs from soccer balls using a filter screen as the barrier. Therefore, the holes in the barrier material used in the K-25 plant had to be just barely big enough for the slightly smaller U-235 gas molecules to squeeze through more easily than the slightly larger U-238 ones.

To give you an idea of how small the holes were, each one was only a few millionths of an inch wide. That's so tiny that you'd have to line up many thousands of them to be the width of a single human hair. The original development work on the barrier material was done at Columbia University and Union Carbide's Bakelite Division. After the war in 1947, all the classified barrier development work was brought onsite at K-25, and a department was established to continue to improve the efficiency of the separation material and to mass produce it.

The K-25 Building was constructed and brought online in record time. Construction started in June 1943, and the first product was produced in March 1945. The plant enriched uranium until 1985, and the site was shut down in 1987. From 1946 to 1950, uranium enriched in the K-25 building was overwhelmingly dedicated to expanding and improving the U.S nuclear weapons stockpile, marking the transition from wartime production to Cold War deterrence. K-25 truly became a major birthplace of the Nuclear Era.

Shortly after the war ended, the K-25 Plant began shipping enriched uranium to research and production reactors fueled by enriched uranium. Some of these reactors produced medi-



The first nuclear-powered submarine, the Nautilus

Today, it is estimated that the United States maintains a deterrent capability of over 1,000 missiles equipped with nuclear warheads. The bulk of the uranium used in these warheads has been provided by K-25 and its sister plant at Portsmouth, Ohio. All these warheads contain parts manufactured at the Y-12 National Security Complex. Approximately 400 of these warheads are carried on Minuteman missiles, which are deployed in underground silos across the western United States. Over an estimated 600 are carried aboard the Ohio-class nuclear-powered submarines.

But the real story and contribution to society began in 1957 when K-25 began providing tens of thousands of tons of low-enriched uranium that was converted into fuel rods for nuclear electrical power plants.

From 1960 to the end of operations enriching uranium in 1985, K-25 is estimated to have produced enough low-enriched uranium to have electrified over 50 billion homes for a year. Today, approximately 18% of all electricity consumed in the United States is provided by nuclear power plants, which are fueled by low-enriched uranium produced from the U.S. Gaseous Diffusion Complex.

Not only did K-25 provide enrichment services for the United States, but under a toll enrichment program, over 30 countries sent their feedstock to the U.S. to be enriched to provide the low-enriched uranium needed for their countries' nuclear power plants. Japan was the country that contracted for the most enrichment services. It is interesting to note that all the toll enrichment services provided to other countries conducted at the K-25 plant were subject to sales tax, generating millions of dollars in revenue for the State of Tennessee.

K-25 is frequently referred to as the flagship of the U.S. Gaseous Diffusion Plants. There are three reasons for this. Specifically, it is called this because the K-25 Plant came online first and therefore was the first to provide fuel for the nuclear navy, for research reactors to produce medical isotopes, to provide the first uranium for missiles, and the first to provide uranium for nuclear power plants. Secondly, the ongoing research to improve the efficiency of the plants was conducted at the K-25 plant. For many years, over 200 full-time engineers, scientists, and technicians conducted research that, over the many years of operation, improved the plant efficiency by 30 to 40%. There were four major test pilot plants on the site. Two for barrier research, one for compressor research, and one for testing full-scale stage operations. The Technical Division included (a) the Department of Mechanical Engineering, (b) the Chemistry Department, (c) the Barrier Development Department, and (d) the Analytical Analysis Department.

the three gaseous diffusion plants over their years of operational life was produced at K-25 and then installed at Oak Ridge, Portsmouth, or Paducah. Although most of the data is still classified, it is estimated that the barrier plant in Oak Ridge produced over 150,000 miles of barrier material, or enough to stretch around the Earth over six times.

The research conducted at the K-25 plant was used in two major modernization and upgrade programs, the Cascade Improvement Program and the Cascade Upgrade Program. Under these programs completed in the 1970s, new barrier materials were installed, compressors were replaced, control systems were modernized, and cooling systems were upgraded. The entire plant was completely upgraded with new components installed, thereby lowering energy consumption and improving reliability so that the plant could extend its useful life to the mid-1980s.

On August 27, 1985, K-25 ceased to operate as a gaseous diffusion plant. But the story does not end there. Shortly after it ceased producing enriched uranium, plans began to be developed to dismantle the plant and convert the site into a standard industrial park to house a variety of industries.

A private partnership was created, the Community Reuse Organization of East Tennessee, charged to transfer the government-owned land to private ownership and create private-sector jobs. Simultaneously, the government took on a multiyear project to tear down and remove all of the gaseous diffusion plant equipment in a safe and environmentally acceptable manner.

After the expenditure of over a billion dollars, that task has been completed, and a large portion of the land has been transferred to private ownership. A diverse number of industries is already operating on the site including (a) Kairos Power is building two new small modular nuclear reactors that will demonstrate their ability to be used to electrify a city, (b) Energy Solutions operates a rail to truck transfer station and (c) East Tennessee Railroad services company repairs rail cars and engines for other industries. In addition, the 44-acre footprint of the original K-25 building has been designated as a part of the Manhattan Project National Historical Park. Located adjacent to the park is the K-25 Atomic History Museum, and to be opened in September of this year will be the K-25 Interpretive Center. Several solar farms are also located on the site. K-25 truly deserves its designation by the American Chemical Society as a National Historic Chemical Landmark. From helping to end World War II, to being a part of providing nuclear deterrence for the country, to helping electrify the world, and now to serve as a hub for new industries bringing high-paid jobs to Tennessee, K-25 HAS TRULY MADE A HUGE DIFFERENCE!!!

cal isotopes that were ultimately used to diagnose or treat disease in humans, including cancer.

From 1945 to mid-1950, the K-25 plant was the only plant producing enriched uranium. During that period, four additional buildings were added at the K-25 site, and two additional Gaseous Diffusion Plants were built, one at Portsmouth, Ohio, and one at Paducah, Kentucky.

In 1952, K-25 provided the enriched uranium that was used to fuel the first nuclear-powered submarine, the Nautilus. Today, the entire U.S fleet of 68 submarines is nuclear-powered, and in addition, there are 11 active nuclear-powered aircraft carriers. The K-25 plant and its sister plant at Portsmouth provided fuel for the Navy. Y-12 National Security Complex has provided the highly enriched uranium fuel to the U. S. Navy since 2002.

In 1955, as part of the Cold War deterrent program, the United States fielded its first missile equipped with a nuclear warhead, the Redstone.

Finally, all the barrier material needed for

John Chapter 8

Melvin Howard

(John 8:1-11) The Woman Taken in Adultery: A majority of modern textual critics do not believe this section was a part of John's original Gospel. It is missing from the oldest Greek manuscripts. Some respectable scholars, however, accepted it as genuine.

It was early morning when Jesus entered the temple compound (one of the outer courts), but the people were gathered to hear him. He sat down and taught them. The study session was rudely interrupted when certain scribes and Pharisees forcefully brought in a woman who had been caught in the act

of adultery. They thrust her into the middle of the assembly and essentially said: "This woman has been caught in the very act of committing adultery; the law says she is to be stoned. What do you say about it?" They were putting him to the test. If he dismissed her, they supposed he would be in conflict with Moses' law. If he commanded her to be stoned, he would be in trouble with the Roman authorities who had removed the right of capital punishment from the Jews (18:31). Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground (exactly what no one knows). He then said, "He who is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." They had violated the very law to which they appealed. She had been taken in the "very act," but in an adultery case, both parties were subject to the penalty. Where was the man? They cared not a whit for the law, and Jesus knew it. He exposed their hypocrisy and they all vacated the premises! He informed the woman that he would not "condemn" her (judicially, press for her death). He did tell her to go and "sin no more." Try as hard as they would, the Lord's opponents were no match for him.

(John 8:12-20) Jesus, the Light of the World: It may have been that the narrative that follows is related to the feast of the tabernacles mentioned in the previous chapter. On this occasion, Jesus declared: "I am the light of the world: he who follows [steadfastly] me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

When the Israelites departed from Egypt, "Jehovah went before them by day in a pillar of cloud, to lead them the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light" (Ex. 13:21). These phenomena accompanied God's children throughout their wilderness sojourn. When the Lord was living on earth, this wilderness wondering was commemorated yearly by the feast of tabernacles. It is said that during this feast the people lit large lamps or torches within the temple court and gave themselves to festivity. The brilliant lighting supposedly was a memorial of the pillar of fire which they followed in the wilderness. Perhaps in the Lord's presentation there was an allusion to the aforementioned lighting: "I am the light of the world." He is the illuminator of men. From this account we gather: (a) Men are in darkness. (b) Christ is man's illumination. (c) To benefit from this illumination, the Lord must be followed. (d) Like following the pillar of fire, he must be pursued daily. (e) Following that light will result in life.

The Pharisees charged Christ: "You bear witness of yourself. Your witness is not true." But Christ retorted: "Even if I bear witness of myself, my witness is true. I know from where I came, and where I am going---facts of which you are wholly unaware" (v. 13-14). The Lord's statement here does not conflict with 5:31, for two different points of emphasis are in view. The witness to his identity was not solely his; other witnesses were introduced in chapter five. On the other hand, in this setting he provides testimony regarding information to which only he had access. This point of focus is restricted.

These hypocrites had been passing judgment upon the Son of God, and their judgment had been entirely superficial. They judged on the basis of the "flesh." He judged no man in that sense (v. 15). Jesus' judgment was corroborated by the fact that it was in conjunction with the Father---which conformed to the law's requirement of at least two witnesses (v. 16-18). Incidentally, this context clearly demonstrates the fact that the Father and the Son are distinct persons---not the same individual, as alleged by the Oneness Pentecostal sect.

They pressed for information about his "Father." The Lord refused to respond directly to their insincere question. He pointed out that had they listened to him and come to know him, they would have known the Father (10:30; 14:9). These words were spoken in the temple treasure, in the court of women (Mk. 12:43).

And such had to be the case if he was to be the spotless sacrifice for human sin (1 Pet. 1:19).

Jesus then made a claim that no other rational human being in the history of the world could make conscientiously: "I always do the things that are pleasing to him" (v. 29). Amazingly, as he spoke these words, there were some in the crowd who "believed on him" (v. 30). That their faith was genuine is not to be doubted. As the subsequent context will reveal, however, that faith was fragile and fleeting. One can believe and later not believe. And there are consequences to that apostasy (Heb. 3:12).

(John 8:31-59) Kinship of Abraham---True and False: The Lord now addressed the Jews that "had believed him," they had entertained a measure of faith in him, though he knew it was shallow. "If you remain in my word, then are you genuinely my disciples." This is quite contrary to the Calvinistic dogma that a believer will always be a true disciple, regardless of his conduct. This idea could not be more erroneous. Jesus then spoke of freedom, which implies bondage. "You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free" (v. 32). The following points are important: (a) There is a body of moral and religious information that is truth. Truth is the opposite of error. (b) There is a state of bondage, and only the truth is able to set one free from such. (c) In order for truth to accomplish this, it must be "known" and then applied (Gal. 5:7).

These Jewish believers replied: "We are Abraham's seed" (v. 33). (There was a sense in which they were Abraham's seed and another sense in which they were not). They declared they had never been in bondage to anyone. This claim was absurd. They had been in bondage numerous times---to the Egyptians fifteen centuries earlier and to the Romans at present (with other nations sandwiched in between). Christ ignored that wild claim and emphasized another kind of bondage. The person who "commits sin" (as an unrestrained way of life) is "a slave of sin" (v. 34). That sort of servitude leads eventually to disownment. Only true children have an abiding relationship (v. 5), which only he, the Son, can provide (v. 36).

While they were Abraham's seed physically, they were not his seed in the noblest sense of the expression, as evidenced by the fact that they were seeking to kill the one who came as the special "seed" promised to the patriarch twenty centuries earlier (Gen. 22:18). Their murderous disposition was proof that the Lord's word did not have free course in them. Jesus was about to get very personal.

They boasted that their father was Abraham, but the Lord framed as irresistible argument to the contrary. "If you were truly Abraham's seed, you would act the way he did. But you are showing yourselves to be opposite in character from your great ancestor; you are attempting to kill his promised offspring. Thus, you are not his genuine seed!" (v. 39-40). Rather, Christ declared, "You do the works of your [real] father." Momentarily, he will identify that "ancestor (the Devil)."

In this escalating debate, Jesus declared: "If God were your Father [implying he is not], you would love me"---but they didn't, thus they weren't! He contended he was sent by God; to reject the "sent" is to reject the "sender." He accused the Jews of being spiritually "thick," entirely unwilling to grasp what he is saying. Then the hammer is dropped: "You are of your father, the devil, and the lust of your father is what you will to do." Satan is characterized as a "murderer," because by his seduction of our grandparents, Adam and Eve, he has led all of us to the cemetery (Rom. 5:12). He is a liar and the father of like kind. "I speak the truth; you say otherwise---which places you in the same class as your 'father'" (v. 44-45).

Who but an innocent man would dare to challenge his enemies with this question: "Which of you can convict me of sin?" One would scarcely goad a close friend with such a proposition. They responded with the silly allegation that he was a demon-possessed Samaritan (v. 48), but there was no sin charge that would stick. The Lord upbraided them for dishonoring him and boldly declared that those who "keep his word" will never see death. This is spiritual death. His antagonists thought they had him this time. Abraham and the prophets all died. "Are you greater than those men?" (v. 53). Jesus did not respond to such an absurd argument from men who were on an entirely carnal plain. The Lord was not seeking the glory of men, but of God, of whom they had not the remotest idea. But Christ knew his Father and kept his word (v. 55).

Jesus then made a remarkable statement that was an explosion in the debate. "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad" (v. 56). The Jews understood exactly what he was saying this time and it inflamed them. "You are not yet fifty years old, and you claim to have seen Abraham?" The Savior had affirmed contemporaneous existence with someone who lived two thousand years earlier. And then, to add fuel to the fire, Jesus said, "Most assuredly I say to you, 'Before Abraham came into existence [the verb indicates commencement in time], I am [I always have been]'" (v. 58). There could be no mistaking his meaning: the Lord was claiming the nature of eternal deity. They knew it. According to them, this was blasphemy---and he must die immediately (Rome's restriction or not). They picked up rocks to stone him but could not; he "was hidden" (passive form) from them and left the temple (v. 59). How he was concealed---naturally or supernaturally---is not stated.

(John 8:21-30) A Rebuke for Unbelieving Jews: Again Christ told his auditors that he was going away; they would seek him, but would not follow. They would die in their "sin" (singular)---the sin of rejecting him. Hence, they would not be able to join him (in heaven). They were confused at his language, wondering if he intended to commit suicide (v. 22). He told them they lived in a different spiritual atmosphere---it was carnal, whereas he was "not of this world." They were too dull to appreciate spiritual issues. He warned them" "Except you believe that I am, you will die in your sins" (v. 24). There is no "he" in the sentence, as reflected in most translations. It is clear Jesus is identifying himself with the I AM of Exodus 3:14 and claiming to posses the very eternal nature of Jehovah himself. They ask with apparent shock: "Who are you?"

The Lord had taught them many things from the beginning, but the truths had fallen on hard hearts and there was no need to rehearse them at this point. They did not comprehend that he had spoken to them about his relationship with the Father. Christ then went on to a more immediate matter---a prophecy about his death. "When you have lifted up the Son of Man you will know that I am, and that I am doing my Father's will as he had taught me" (v. 28). "Lifting up" is obviously a reference to the manner of his death, the crucifixion (12:32-33). He reaffirmed that he was not alone, but his Father was by his side (v. 29). He was absolutely perfect.

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