

= Ed Westcott =

James Edward Westcott (born January 20 , 1922) is a photographer who worked for the United States government in Oak Ridge , Tennessee , during the Manhattan Project and the Cold War . As one of the few people permitted to have a camera in the Oak Ridge area during the Manhattan Project , he created the main visual record of the construction and operation of the Oak Ridge production facilities and of civilian life in the enclosed community of Oak Ridge .

= = Early life and career = =

Ed Westcott was born on January 20 , 1922 , in Chattanooga , Tennessee , the son of Jamie and Lucille Westcott , and moved to Nashville with his family as a child . After Ed expressed an interest in photography , his father saved for a year to buy him a Foth Derby camera that cost \$ 25 . The gift of that camera in the Depression year of 1934 started young Ed on the path to his future career . During his teenage years , he got into the business of developing film for friends and neighbors and worked in several Nashville portrait studios . In 1941 , he joined the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers , as a photographer in the Corps ' Nashville District . His job for the Corps sent him around the region to create photographic documentation of several dams , a site in Tennessee that later became prisoner of war camp , and the airport and other facilities at Fort Campbell on the Tennessee @-@ Kentucky border .

= = Photographer for the Manhattan Project and its aftermath = =

In December 1942 , the Army Corps transferred the 20 @-@ year @-@ old Westcott to the Clinton Engineer Works at the then @-@ secret Oak Ridge site . He later recalled that :

By November 1942 , work was nearing completion on army camps , air bases , dams and enemy internment camps in seven southern states where I photographed many areas for site selection and construction progress reports for the US Corps of Engineers . I was one of the last of the 10 cameramen to leave the Nashville District office of the Corps of Engineers and the only one to accept a transfer with the engineers . Having a choice of a project in Alaska or a new job starting near Knoxville that would take a predicted five years to complete , I selected Knoxville .

Westcott was the 29th employee hired for the Manhattan Project in Oak Ridge , where he was to work as an official government photographer from 1942 to 1966 . During much of World War II he was employed by the Roane @-@ Anderson Company , under contract to the Army Corps . As well as photographing the construction and mechanical workings of the X @-@ 10 , K @-@ 25 , Y @-@ 12 , and S @-@ 50 production facilities , he photographed civilian activities in Oak Ridge for the community 's Army @-@ sponsored weekly newspaper , the Oak Ridge Journal . All of Westcott 's wartime photos were produced with either a Speed Graphic or an 8x10 Deardorff view camera .

Some of his images were among the photos that were distributed to news media with the announcement of the first atomic bomb and the secret project that created it . In the weeks before the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945 , prints of 18 of his photographs were made in secrecy in preparation for the announcement . The photographs were declassified and distributed as part of the press kit . He also processed film taken by the damage assessment teams in his laboratory in Oak Ridge . It took three days to print them . Armed guards outside the darkroom .

In June 1945 , Westcott became an Army employee again , and in the post @-@ war years he transitioned to employment with the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) after its formation in 1946 . In 1966 he was assigned to the AEC headquarters near Washington , DC , in Germantown , Maryland , where he worked for the AEC and its successor agencies (the Energy Research and Development Administration and Department of Energy) until retiring in 1977 . He photographed nuclear power stations all over the United States .

During Westcott 's 35 @-@ year professional career , his assignments included creating photographic documentation of many notable people , including Manhattan Project scientists J. Robert Oppenheimer , Arthur Compton , Glenn Seaborg , Vannevar Bush , Ernest O. Lawrence ,

and James Bryant Conant , U.S. Army Generals Leslie Groves , Maxwell Taylor and Kenneth Nichols , Admiral Hyman Rickover , Secretary of War Robert P. Patterson , U.S. Senators Estes Kefauver and Kenneth McKellar of Tennessee and Robert A. Taft of Ohio , Tennessee Valley Authority director and AEC chairman David Lilienthal , and seven or eight U.S. Presidents .

Westcott 's February 1946 photo portrait of Oppenheimer is highly regarded for depicting the Manhattan Project scientific director as a man weary from the tremendous weight of his experience . When he met with Oppenheimer , Westcott learned that the physicist wanted a cigarette but lacked the change to buy some . After Westcott gave him the money he needed , Oppenheimer bought his cigarettes and lit one . Westcott then captured the image of the physicist sitting next to a fireplace mantel in the Oak Ridge Guest House holding the freshly lighted cigarette in his hand .

In spite of the informality suggested by the cigarette , University of Tennessee photography professor Baldwin Lee points out that the photo was carefully planned and posed . According to Lee , Westcott instructed Oppenheimer to sit " slightly askance " and to lean forward slightly , and then he took the photograph from a low vantage point that " makes the viewer physically look up at the man , " thus enhancing the subject 's perceived importance . Lee 's critique also notes that Oppenheimer 's gaze does not appear to be directed anywhere in the room , but instead is aimed at " something very distant and something only he can see . "

= = Exhibits and publications = =

Much of Ed Westcott 's photographic work was classified when it was first created , and some of it remained classified for many years , but access to his work is now largely unrestricted . About 5 @, @ 000 negatives are archived by the National Archives in Washington , DC . His photographs have been widely reproduced , often without naming him as the photographer , in publications and exhibits about the Manhattan Project .

The first museum exhibition devoted to Westcott 's work was organized by the Children 's Museum of Oak Ridge in 1981 , entitled " Oak Ridge Seen 1943 @-@ 1947 : 20 Photographs by Edward Westcott . " In 2005 , the Ewing Gallery of Art and Architecture at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville mounted an exhibition of his photos , entitled " Through the Lens of Ed Westcott : A Photographic History of World War II 's Secret City " . The American Museum of Science and Energy and the Children 's Museum of Oak Ridge both have exhibits devoted to Westcott and his work , in addition to displaying his photos as part of exhibits on the city 's history . A selection of works from the Ewing Gallery exhibit is now a touring museum exhibit .

A photograph of an Oak Ridge supermarket that Westcott created in 1945 , " Tulip Town Market , Grove Center , " was featured by the National Archives as part of a 2005 @-@ 2006 exhibit named " The Way We Worked . " Collections of Westcott 's Oak Ridge photographs have been published in the catalog to the Ewing Gallery exhibit (University of Tennessee , 2005 ; ISBN 0 @-@ 9761663 @-@ 1 @-@ 3) and in the book Oak Ridge by Ed Westcott (Arcadia Publishing , 2005 ; ISBN 0 @-@ 7385 @-@ 4170 @-@ 2 , ISBN 978 @-@ 0 @-@ 7385 @-@ 4170 @-@ 9) . A photo by Westcott of shift change at Y @-@ 12 during the Manhattan Project , blown up to 20 feet (6 @. @ 1 m) by 50 feet (15 m) , is displayed on the wall of the cafeteria at the Y @-@ 12 National Nuclear Security Complex .

= = Personal = =

Westcott resides in Oak Ridge . He was married to Esther Seigenthaler Westcott for 56 years before her death . They had five children . His grandson Phil works as a photographer in Alaska for the National Park Service , documenting the effects of global warming . Westcott suffered a stroke in 2005 that impaired his speech . The Oak Ridge Kroger Marketplace shopping center , which opened in 2014 , is named the " Westcott Center " in his honor .