

Mr. Ray Smith
Historian, Author, Photographer, Newspaper Columnist and Film Producer



With over 54 years living and working in Oak Ridge, TN, Ray has developed an extensive understanding and appreciation of the heritage of Oak Ridge's history, especially the Manhattan Project era and resulting technological advances during ensuing years. For the last 10 years of his 47-year career with the Y-12 National Security Complex, he served as the official Y-12 Historian. Ray now serves as the Official Historian for the city of Oak Ridge, TN. He was appointed to an honorary position in December 2015 and City Council made him the Official Historian in February 2025.

Ray has co-produced the award-winning and highly acclaimed *Secret City: The War Years* and *Secret City: 1945–2006* documentary films that have become the definitive history of Oak Ridge. He has also produced a four-episode television series of 30-minute programs on the history of the Y-12 National Security Complex, *A Nuclear Family*, which has won four platinum Remi awards in the World Fest-Houston International Film Festival. He completed the compilation of twelve documentary short films including the award winning *Our Hidden Past* series into a two DVD set, Y-12 Anthology. These documentary films can be seen at: <https://www.y12.doe.gov/about/history/video-gallery>

His most recent documentary film, produced in January 2018, is *Ed Westcott–Photographer*, a tribute to the famous Manhattan Project and Department of Energy photographer without whose exceptional photographs our Oak Ridge and DOE history would not be nearly so well documented. The documentary film can be seen at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BYvzw9f8M8A>.

In 2017, Ray was appointed a commissioner on the Tennessee Historical Commission and is now serving his third three-year term. He has served on several boards for charitable organizations, one a state level board, The Tennessee Children's Home. He is also on the board of directors of the East Tennessee Historical Society, the American Museum of Science and Energy Foundation, and the national board of directors of the Atomic Heritage Foundation.

In 2018, Ray assisted Dr. Lee Riedinger, Professor of Physics and Director, Bredesen Center for Interdisciplinary Research and Graduate Education at the University of Tennessee, teach an honors course, *Science and History of the Manhattan Project*. The course materials have formed the basis of a book that was published in 2024, *Critical Connections, How Partnerships formed at the Dawn of the Atomic Age Helped Transform a University, a National Laboratory, and a City*.

Since 2006, Ray has published a weekly newspaper column, *Historically Speaking*, in *The Oak Ridger* daily newspaper, <https://smithdray1.net/historicallyspeaking/archive.html> and since 2020, has also published *Historically Speaking* in the Morgan County Today weekly newspaper. He also produced a second weekly newspaper column, *Y-12: An Oak Ridge Treasure and National Resource*, weekly for nine years. <https://www.y12.doe.gov/about/history/our-historian>

Ray is the author of 18 books of *Historically Speaking* newspaper columns published over the past 18 years. He has published 10 books of local nature photographs, produced a 40-image photographic show and was chosen as the exclusive source to provide photographs to decorate the TownePlace Hotel in Oak Ridge as well as a portion of the Y-12 Federal Credit Union. His photographs also decorate other offices in Oak Ridge and some company websites.

Ray routinely leads history tours of Oak Ridge and presents Oak Ridge history an average of 40 times per year at conferences, schools, senior living centers, technical societies, historical groups, book clubs, and festivals. He has taught Oak Ridge Institute for Continued Learning classes for several years on Oak Ridge history and the Manhattan Project National Historical Park.

He is co-host of *Hidden History: Stories from the Secret City* videocast which was recognized with an Award of Excellence for History in Media in 2022 by the East Tennessee Historical Society. <https://www.youtube.com/@hiddenhistorysecretcity>

He is the recipient of the Department of Energy National Nuclear Security Administration's Administrator's Distinguished Service Gold Award, as well as a Lifetime Achievement Award from the East Tennessee Historical Society, the Historic Preservation Medal from the Daughters of the American Revolution, and numerous Awards of Merit including the Hammer Award.