

Y-12 National Security Complex

Secret Military Facilities

Summary...

The Y-12 Plant was built in Bear Creek Valley to separate the uranium 235 isotope from natural uranium in sufficient quantity and quality to produce the fissionable material for atomic weapons. It was the first to accomplish this goal. This plant utilized an electromagnetic process developed at the University of California at Berkeley and had the unusual distinction of using \$300 million worth of silver borrowed from the U.S. Treasury. The silver was used as a substitute for copper in the fabrication of equipment for the plant. The facility was built for \$427 million and employed 22,000 workers. Uranium separation by the electromagnetic process ended in 1947 at the Y-12 Plant.

However, research & development and specialized production continue today at this facility which is still identified by its wartime code name.



In depth...

- [More on Y-12's History](#)
- [Y-12 Oral History videos](#)
- [Y-12 Today](#)