

# [PDF] The Girls Of Atomic City: The Untold Story Of The Women Who Helped Win World War II

Denise Kiernan - pdf download free book

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#### Books Details:

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Author: Denise Kiernan

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#### Description:

A Note from Denise Kiernan, Author of *The Girls of Atomic City*

Most of us have grown up with the humbling power of the atomic bomb looming somewhere in our

collective consciousness. We are at least familiar with the phrase "Manhattan Project," even if we know little of the history behind that World War II effort to make the world's first nuclear weapon. Los Alamos. Oppenheimer. Fermi. Groves. These names may ring a bell, if only a distant one. The story of the Manhattan Project is often discussed from the perspective of high-profile scientific minds and decision-makers.

A black-and-white photo of young women monitoring gigantic panels covered in knobs and dials both altered my view of this story and inspired me to write *The Girls of Atomic City*. I was struck by the youth of these women, the size of the room, the unfamiliar technology. They did not know they were enriching uranium and would not know until a bomb detonated above Hiroshima. What were *they* thinking? What did the Manhattan Project look like through *their* eyes? I had my way in. I tracked down everyone I could who had worked on the Manhattan Project in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, during World War II.

I entered a top-secret compound, one that straddled two worlds: that which existed before and that which followed the dawn of the nuclear age. Octogenarians as my trusted guides, I found not only fission and cyclotrons, but rations and dances. The satisfaction of doing one's part mixed with the anxiety of wartime. It was a world of pioneering spirit and propaganda, of scientific gains and personal loss. Loved ones were far away, deadlines and informants lurking much nearer. There was always waiting: for news, for cigarettes, for letters, for the end of the war. When that end came, it was a relief and a shock. Secrets were revealed, others still remain.

I hope readers will be as fascinated by this moment in time as I was, as I still am.

--This text refers to the edition.

**From** Atomic-bomb history includes works about the communities of workers attached to the main installations where the first nuclear weapon was built. Kiernan's contribution covers Oak Ridge, Tennessee, site of enormous factories built to separate uranium isotopes. A type of oral history, Kiernan's account derives from her intensive interviews with 10 women who, in their youth, labored in a range of occupations at Oak Ridge, from janitor to machine operator to secretary to engineer. With surrounding scaffolding of the scientific fundamentals and the 1942-45 technical development of the bomb, the narrative runs as a collection of individuals' life stories that recall circumstances of recruitment and the spartan conditions at Oak Ridge, on and off the job. Some commonalities of experience include the secrecy in which the women worked and the discrimination they endured (racial segregation in the case of the janitor; sexism in the cases of white women workers). Kiernan snugly fits original research into the creation story of Oak Ridge and should engage readers interested in both women's history and the background of the atomic bomb. --Gilbert Taylor --This text refers to the edition.

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