



# **The Girls of Atomic City: The Untold Story of the Women Who Helped Win World War II**

*Denise Kiernan*

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**Now a New York Times Bestseller!**

**The incredible story of the young women of Oak Ridge, Tennessee, who unwittingly played a crucial role in one of the most significant moments in U.S. history.** The Tennessee town of Oak Ridge was created from scratch in 1942. One of the Manhattan Project's secret cities, it didn't appear on any maps until 1949, and yet at the height of World War II it was using more electricity than New York City and was home to more than 75,000 people, many of them young women recruited from small towns across the South. Their jobs were shrouded in mystery, but they were buoyed by a sense of shared purpose, close friendships--and a surplus of handsome scientists and Army men!

But against this vibrant wartime backdrop, a darker story was unfolding. The penalty for talking about their work--even the most innocuous details--was job loss and eviction. One woman was recruited to spy on her coworkers. They all knew *something* big was happening at Oak Ridge, but few could piece together the true nature of their work until the bomb "Little Boy" was dropped over Hiroshima, Japan, and the secret was out. The shocking revelation: the residents of Oak Ridge were enriching uranium for the atomic bomb.

Though the young women originally believed they would leave Oak Ridge after the war, many met husbands there, made lifelong friends, and still call the seventy-year-old town home. The reverberations from their work there--work they didn't fully understand at the time--are still being felt today. In *The Girls of Atomic City*, Denise Kiernan traces the astonishing story of these unsung WWII workers through interviews with dozens of surviving women and other Oak Ridge residents. Like *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*, this is history and science made fresh and vibrant--a beautifully told, deeply researched story that unfolds in a suspenseful and exciting way.

As heard on National Public Radio's Weekend Edition.

One of Goodreads' Most Popular Books of March 2013.

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