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**A***The Atlantic**The Atlantic*

## The Secret City

ALAN TAYLOR | JUNE 25, 2012 | 29 PHOTOS | IN FOCUS

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Starting in 1942, the U.S. government began quietly acquiring more than 60,000 acres in Eastern Tennessee for the Manhattan Project—the secret World War II program that developed the atomic bomb. The government needed land to build massive facilities to refine and develop nuclear materials for these new weapons, without attracting the attention of enemy spies. The result was a secret town named Oak Ridge that housed tens of thousands of workers and their families. The entire town and facility were fenced in, with armed guards posted at all entries. Workers were sworn to

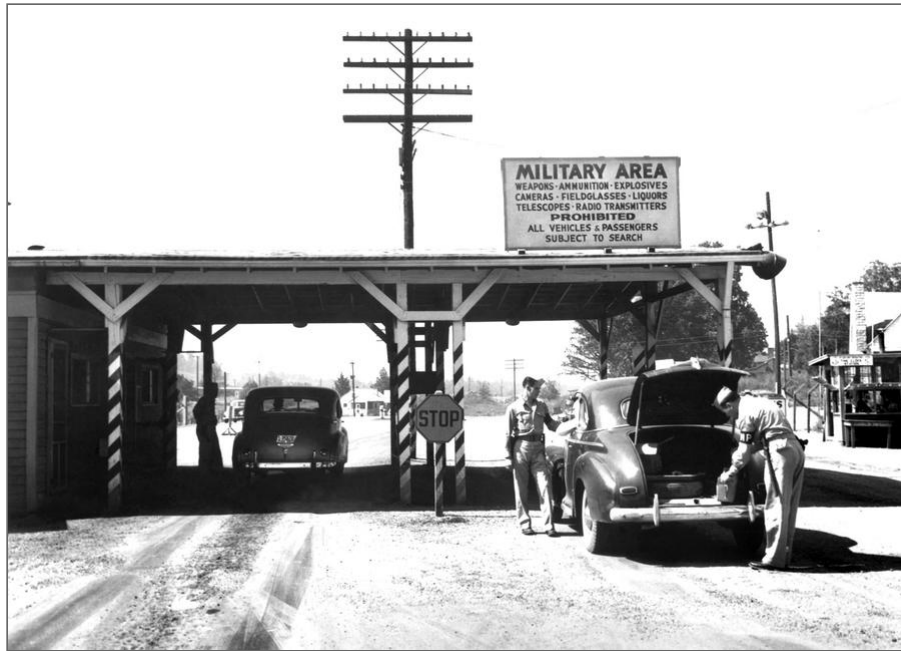
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1. A special traveling exhibit of the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, "Your Stake in the Atom", is housed in its  
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2. Early Construction of the K-25 uranium enrichment facility (background), with one of original houses of Oak Ridge, Tennessee in the foreground, in 1942. That year,  
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**3.** Military Police man Elza Gate in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, in 1945. #

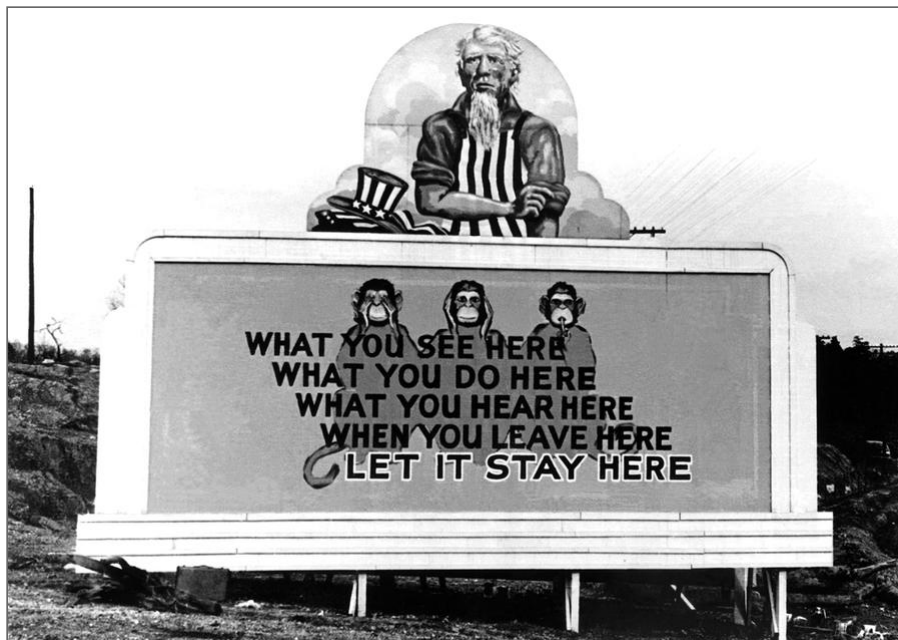
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**4.** Lie detection tests were administered as part of security screening #

U.S. Department of Energy





5. A billboard posted in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, on December 31, 1943. #

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6. Calutron operators at their panels, in the Y-12 plant at Oak Ridge, Tennessee, during World War II. The calutrons were used to refine uranium ore into fissile  
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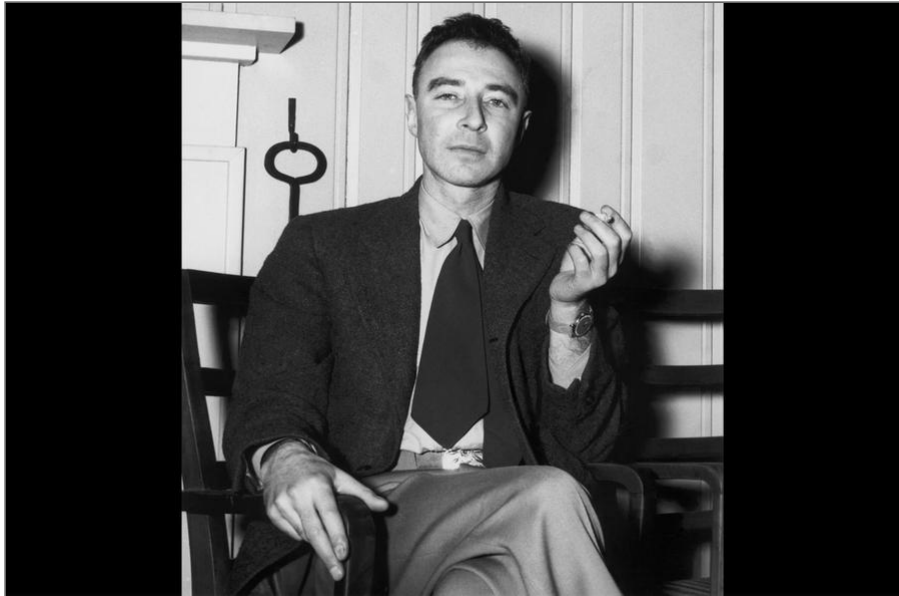
7. Workers perform maintenance on a cell housing in the K-25 uranium enrichment facility, in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. #

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8. A caultron "racetrack" uranium refinery at the Y-12 plant in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, during the Manhattan

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9. Physicist J. Robert Oppenheimer at Oak Ridge, on February 14, 1946. Oppenheimer was called the "father

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10. Temporary Housing (Hutments) fill the formerly empty valleys of Oak Ridge in 1945. The sudden growth

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11. A young entrepreneur during the days of the Manhattan Project, in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. #

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12. Shift change at the Y-12 uranium enrichment facility in Oak Ridge. Notice the billboard: "Make CEW count

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13. A billboard in Oak Ridge, photographed during WWII, on January 21, 1944. #

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14. The main control room at the K-25 uranium enrichment plant in Oak Ridge. #

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**15.** Welding at the K-25 facility in Oak Ridge, in February of 1945. At the height of production, nearly  
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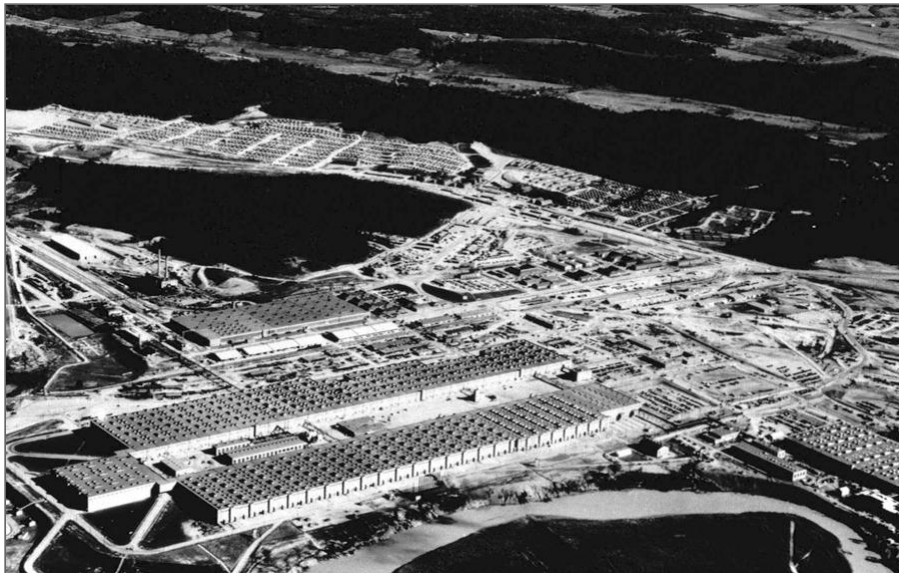
**16.** Kiddy Club at the Midtown Recreation Hall in Oak Ridge, on January 6, 1945. #

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**17.** A Link Trainer, a type of flight simulator produced between the early 1930s and early 1950s, in Oak Ridge, in September of 1945. #

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**18.** This 1945 photograph shows the giant 44 acre K-25 plant in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, where the uranium for the first atomic weapon was produced. #

AP Photo/U.S. Department of Energy





19. V-J day celebration in Jackson Square in downtown Oak Ridge in August of 1945. When the first atomic  
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20. Oak Ridge's Grove Theater shows "The Beginning or The End" in March of 1947. #

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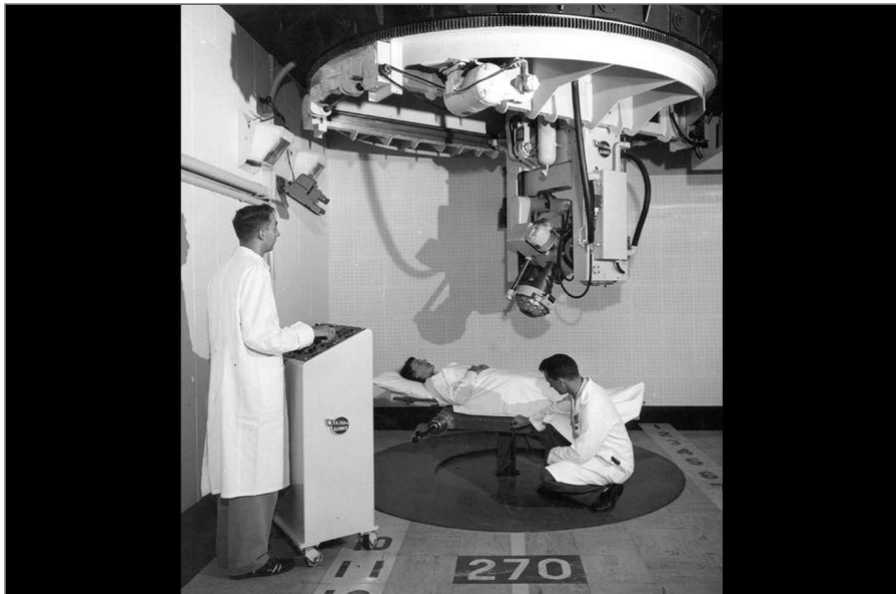




21. Oak Ridge's X-10 graphite reactor, in 1947. X-10 was the world's second artificial nuclear reactor (after [Read more +](#)



22. An employee at the Oak Ridge electromagnetic process plant, where stable isotopes are concentrated, [Read more +](#)



23. A therapy unit installed at the Oak Ridge hospital in 1955 used a source of radioactive cesium-137 to kill

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24. Two of 40,000 mice being used in atomic tests at Oak Ridge, by scientists seeking to learn the possible

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25. An "Atoms For Peace" traveling exhibit in Oak Ridge, in 1957. President Dwight D. Eisenhower

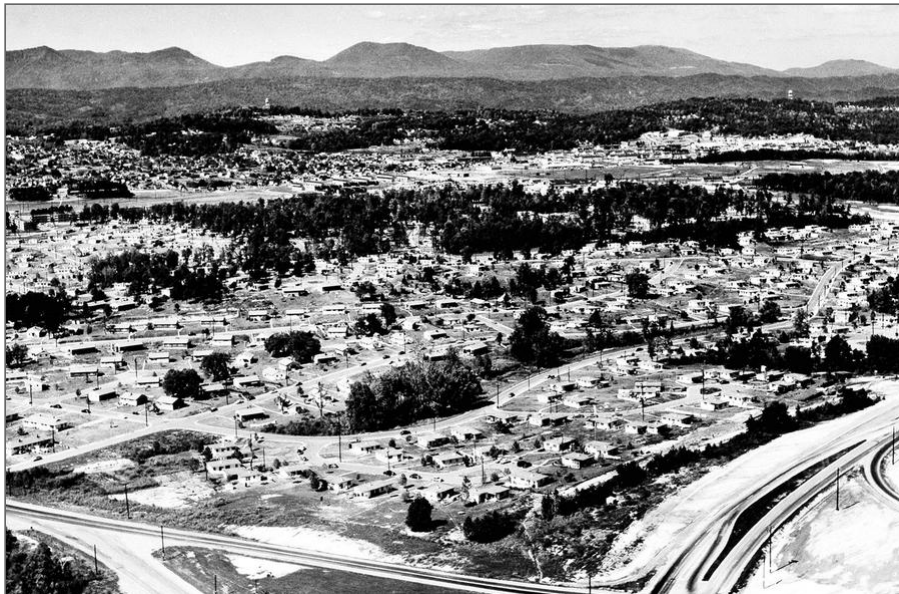
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26. Senator John F. Kennedy visits Oak Ridge National Lab on February 24, 1959. <#>

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**27.** Oak Ridge, Tennessee, on April 21, 1959. When it was first founded in 1942 to supply housing for workers

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**28.** A view of the K-25 uranium enrichment facilities from a patrol radio relay tower in Oak Ridge, on November 7, 1960. <#>

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