

Oak Ridge Secret City Heritage An “Our Own Council Patch” Girl Scout Council of the Southern Appalachians

Girl Scout Museum volunteers wrote this “Travel Opportunity” patch program. When your troop is ready to earn this patch, you’ll probably want to spend an entire day in Oak Ridge. Then have the girls play the board and card games in the Portable Packet after the trip. There are so many interesting, fun and educational things to do in Oak Ridge! (See the Leader’s Guide.)

Contents of Portable Program Packet: (Borrow it from a service center shop)

- Patch Requirements
- Leader’s Guide of Helpful Information
- Event List: “Secret City” Heritage
- Checklist for Children’s Museum Displays
- Play Script – “A 1940’s Radio Interview”

Additional Materials in the Packet:

- Board Game (2 copies) Playing this is an important part of earning the patch!
- Card game
- Books- “A Guide to the Manhattan Project” & “Oak Ridge Heritage Tour”
- Various Brochures



- Requirements -
Oak Ridge Secret City Heritage Patch*
Girl Scout Council of the Southern Appalachians
A Travel Opportunity Patch

This patch is designed for Girl Scout Brownies and older, AND it can be earned over again at every level by doing the five steps. Simply go into greater depth and/or choose different (more advanced) activities from the suggestions, as you get older.

The Leader's Guide offers valuable information, and there is a **Secret City Packet** with program materials available to borrow from the Girl Scout Museum. It can be checked out through each Girl Scout Shop.

Purpose: When you've earned this patch, you'll have discovered some history about why Oak Ridge, Tennessee was a "Secret City" during World War II and how the Secret City helped to win the war. You'll be able to tell others some of what happened during the Manhattan Project years in the 1940's.

Step 1: Imagine if you had to pack up all your belongings, leave your friends, and go to live in a secret place watched by armed guards. Prepare for your adventure by hearing or reading and discussing, briefly, the handout "Event List: Secret City Heritage."

Step 2: Visit the Children's Museum of Oak Ridge (CMOR) to view exhibits that tell how unique Oak Ridge was during the early years. Your group should use the checklist of displays to help you focus. You should also view the Girl Scout exhibit. It explains how Girl Scouts was the first youth organization in Oak Ridge, and how it too had to be kept secret. Did you know that Children's Museum was started by a Girl Scout troop in 1973?

Step 3: Continue learning about the unique Secret City during WWII by doing *one or more* of these:

____ Explore the flat top house to see what housing was like during the Manhattan Project. It's located at the American Museum of Science and Energy.

____ Walk through the Secret City Commemorative Walk, dedicated to thousands of people who founded Oak Ridge, 1942 – 1949. It's located at Bissell Park, at the Civic Center/Library on Oak Ridge Turnpike.

____ Spend time at the International Friendship Bell, located at Bissell Park. Read the inscriptions on the bell and take turns ringing it.

Step 4: Use the hands-on Secret City board and card games, or, with others, read the play: "1940's Radio Interview," &/or look at and make an identity badge like the Secret City identity badge. This will reinforce what you've been learning. These items are in the Secret City Badge **Portable Program Packet**.

Step 5: Consider making and sharing a project with others to tell at least one thing you learned about Oak Ridge, the Secret City of World War II. Examples: Show and explain your project to your family, troop or class, or make a bulletin board display, video or you-tube presentation etc.

- Originally written in 1983. Revisions made 1993, 2003, 2013.

Leader's Guide of Helpful Information

Children's Museum of Oak Ridge (CMOR)- 865-482-1074

461 W. outer Dr.

Oak Ridge, TN 37830

ChildrensmuseumofOakRidge.org

Please call ahead to make reservations for your troop's museum visit for requirement #2. A lower admission price of \$3 per person is available only for Girl Scouts who are earning the Secret City Patch. Use the patch checklist as you view exhibits to help the group stay focused. After seeing the Secret City and Girl Scout parts of the museum the girls will probably want to explore the Rainforest and many other museum areas. There is a gift shop!

Lunch- You may want to have the girls bring sack lunches to be eaten at one of the many parks. If it's raining, they may picnic on the lobby floor just outside the gym at Children's Museum.

Playgrounds with picnic areas: There are many! Here are just a few - Children's Museum Park; The New Cedar Hill Park, Michigan Ave, Oak Ridge 865-425-3450; A.K. Bissell Park behind Oak Ridge Civic Center/Library (on Oak Ridge Turnpike)

Flat Top House – located next to the American Museum of Science and Energy (AMSE) 300 S Tulane Ave, Oak Ridge 865-576-3200. It's necessary to go into the museum to get to the Flat Top House next door. If you explain that the group only wants to tour the house (for a Girl Scout Secret City Patch) and not the entire museum, there won't be a charge. There's a neat gift shop with no admission charge and a shaded picnic area next to the museum.

Commemorative Walk – Dedicated to those who founded Oak Ridge, 1942-1949, is located at the Civic Center on Oak Ridge Turnpike at Tulane Ave. Younger girls will not be as interested as older ones, but a quick walk-through would still be appropriate. Then the group could walk on over to the Friendship Bell and Bissell Park Playground.

Friendship Bell – located at the back of the track immediately west of the Civic Center. It is approximately 7 feet by 5 feet, and it is an expression of hope for everlasting peace, friendship and understanding among all people of the world. The Oak Ridge – Japan historical link has been supported strongly in both countries. It is a lasting legacy, and leaders can help girls understand that although the two countries fought a terrible war against each other, we are now friends. There is a sister city program between Oak Ridge and Naka-shi, Japan where students visit back and forth. Girl Scouts from Japan visited Oak Ridge in 2006 and another visit is being planned for 2014. You are allowed to ring the bell, and your girls might think about world friendship as they do that!

Big Ed's Pizza – 101 Broadway Ave, Oak Ridge, 865-482-4885 (closed Sundays)

Famous people have visited this special restaurant, and t-shirts are available for purchase. Try to go early or late since the restaurant becomes very busy at regular lunch/dinner times.

NOTE: If your troop is thinking of staying overnight, you might consider going to Camp Tanasi, 123 Dark Hollow Rd, Andersonville. It's approximately 45 minutes away. There are several motels in Oak Ridge. If you have a tax-exempt form, be sure to have it with you and use it!

Event List: “Secret City” Heritage Oak Ridge, Tennessee

Introduction - Oak Ridge, Tennessee played an important role during World War II by developing the atomic bomb that was dropped on Hiroshima, Japan. That bomb helped to end the war! The Atomic Bomb was the first nuclear weapon used in wartime. This is a very condensed explanation of the unique beginning of Girl Scouting in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, “The Secret City.”

- 1- Many years ago (1942), during World War II, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, the U.S. government and Major General Leslie Groves created an official secret area in Tennessee to develop a uranium bomb. It was called “The Manhattan Project.” Years later this secret area became the city of Oak Ridge.
- 2- The large area was fenced in, and there were guardhouses with armed guards at the entrances. Only people with special government badges were allowed to come in. There was no such place as Oak Ridge on any map.
- 3- A huge wartime population of top scientists, construction workers and their families was recruited to live and work in The Secret City. No one knew the whole story of why they were asked to move to the area. Homes, churches and schools were built, and teachers were hired. Construction workers later named the town Oak Ridge.
- 4- Children attended school but could use only their first names. This was to protect their fathers’ identities for security reasons. If the scientists’ names were known, the enemy might discover the purpose of the secret project in The Secret City.
- 5- In 1943, **Elsie Novy**, a young, dynamic teacher at the first school, Pine Valley Elementary, responded to her principal’s concern for how to help so many children who had been uprooted when their families relocated to the Secret City. She said, “We need Girl Scouts – something most girls already know and love.”
- 6- Since the secret area was run by the US government, Elsie Novy and her principal convinced Manhattan Project’s commanding officer, General Leslie Groves, that Girl Scouts was necessary for “The War Effort.” General Groves and Miss Novy travelled by an unmarked car to a “secure phone” in Knoxville. They called FBI headquarters in Washington D.C. Permission was granted to organize Girl Scouts in The Secret City. Only one person from Girl Scout National Headquarters was allowed to know about the group!
- 7- Girl Scouts was the first organized activity for youth in Oak Ridge (1943). Girls and adults were registered for Girl Scouts by first names only because the Army didn’t want anyone to notice information such as the many physicists and other scientists in Oak Ridge. By 1944 there were three elementary schools with 26 lone troops. The Army censored all Girl Scout correspondence and had to approve all equipment and badge orders until November 1945. By January 1945 there were 41 troops with 783 girls.

- 8- Mrs. Willena Stone was very involved in the early days and was a good friend of Elsie Novy. Several days after the explosion of the atomic bomb, Willena Stone resigned suddenly from local Girl Scouting and departed with her husband- leaving Girl Scout friends mystified. [Many years later it was discovered that they returned to the University of California at Berkley, where Dr. Stone was Professor of Roentgenology. Dr. Robert Stone was recognized as being part of the "Atomic Bomb Brain Trust." He was presented a Medal of Merit by Major General Leslie Groves. Because of strict security, Dr. Stone had traveled under false names on frequent trips in and out of The Secret City, and Willena's Girl Scout friends knew nothing about this. Mrs. Stone died in 1975 and was listed as "an active worker in Girl Scouts of the U.S.A. for many years."]
- 9- In May 1945 Elsie Novy was awarded the Thanks Badge as she planned to leave Oak Ridge for Red Cross service in the Pacific War Zone. In August 1945, when Japan agreed to surrender, the war ended. Oak Ridge Girl Scouts received an official charter after the war ended. Also, after the war Oak Ridge became incorporated. The city's transfer from the federal government took place June 1, 1960.
- 10- Elsie Novy, who started Girl Scouting in the Secret City, married and became **Elsie Novy Atkins**. She taught school in a number of locations and remained active in Girl Scouting all her life. In 1982 she returned to Oak Ridge for a visit and to reminisce about the early days of Girl Scouting in The Secret City. Elsie Novy Atkins died in 2010, and she was still a Girl Scout! She was memorialized at the 100th anniversary celebration of Girls Scouting in 2012, and her information is part of a permanent Girl Scout exhibition at the Children's Museum of Oak Ridge. In the city of Oak Ridge today, Girl Scouting continues as a vibrant and active program.
- 11- Today, the International Friendship Bell (aka the peace bell) near the Oak Ridge Civic Center, symbolizes international friendship and hopes for a peaceful future. It was dedicated in 1996 and provides a lasting legacy of Oak Ridge: *Born of war, living for peace, growing through science.*

Sources

- *And The Fence Came Down*, by Joyce Maienschein and Eileen Neiler (with the Oak Ridge Community Foundation, Inc.)
- Internet documentation of World War II
- World Wide Web, Howell Family Genealogy Pages
- Newspaper, *The Oak Ridger*
- American Museum of Science and Energy, Oak Ridge, Tennessee
- Children's Museum of Oak Ridge

Checklist for Secret City Patch: Displays at Children's Museum (The Manhattan Project)

> Use the checklist to help focus on **Secret City** details. You don't have to see these items in order, but do encourage the group to read and talk about what they are seeing. Nothing needs to be written down!

>Note: Most of the appropriate information will be upstairs- after you walk down the first hallway, "**Difficult Decisions**," quickly. (If desired, you can return to that hallway later—It's more for adults than the information that girls will enjoy upstairs) There are so many other things to see in this museum- **AFTER** you finish this list!

From the welcome desk, turn right, and look for just two details in this first hallway:

___ 1. In 1941, Franklin D Roosevelt was president. What happened, in Hawaii, for the USA to declare war on Japan? (4th display area) The president said, "This day will live in infamy." What do you think he meant?

___ 2. Which president authorized dropping an atomic bomb on Japan to help end the war?

Now go up the stairs and turn left. This is all about life here during the Manhattan Project.

Dormitory Life

___ So many people moved to the Secret City right after college and they weren't married yet. Where did they live?

Ed Westcott Room

___ Life in a Cemesto house: Listen to the radio playing. Where is the TV? Why? How is this house different from yours? (Cemesto was a combination of cement and asbestos)

___ Find pictures of A, B, C, D etc. houses (Alphabet Houses.) Try to find other types of Manhattan Project housing for the workers: Flat tops, hutments, dormitories, trailers etc.

___ Why were the people walking on boardwalks instead of sidewalks?

___ Children: see where they went to school and what else they did in the Secret City.

___ Guarding the Secret City: There was a long, long (90 miles) fence all around the city, and armed guards kept watch for spies. Find the guard. Go up in the guard tower (careful- don't bump your head!) Look around to find the five spies pictured on the poster up there.

___ There's a special sign in the guard house to remind people not to talk about the secrets they might see in this city. What does it say?

___ What were the Oak Ridge workers doing that was so secretive? (Workers were building parts for a weapon that would bring peace and end the war that lasted 6 terrible years.)

___ Find an American Flag from the Manhattan Project. Why is it different from today's flag?

___ Who was the official Manhattan Project photographer? Find his cameras and photos.

___ When you get home, you might want to look online to find Ed Westcott's photos from the Manhattan Project in 1943. – He's very famous!

Hallway outside of Ed Westcott Room

___ These are Ed Westcott's photos. Find a picture of General Leslie Groves. Why was he very important in the World War II Secret City? Also, in 1943 he said that Girl Scouts was important for the "War Effort." With the FBI, he helped to get permission for troops to form!

___ Gates to the city (where the red stop sign is)- Find the passes and badges that allowed people to be here. Workers needed to show passes, and everyone age 12 and up had to keep their badges with them.

___ Find a photograph of some Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts from many years ago.

___ Now go straight ahead to see the **GIRL SCOUT EXHIBIT**. Who started Girl Scouts in Oak Ridge during the secret years of World War II? Girl Scouts was the first Youth organization in the Secret City. It started here in 1943. How long ago was that? (Do the math!)

___ What are some of the Girl Scout songs you can hear when you push a button?

___ What color uniforms do you see?

___ Which troop started this Children's Museum of Oak Ridge?

Play Script – “A 1940’s Radio Interview”

How Girl Scouts Began in The Secret City, Oak Ridge, TN

1st Announcer: In the early 1940’s, during World War II, people came from across the country. There were large families and small, with all their belongings. They came to live in a secret city and left behind friends and relatives too. Fences surrounded 90 square miles and armed guards watched the area. This new city was not found on any map!

2nd Announcer: Thousands of people poured in from 48 states, to live in houses as quickly as they were built. The hammering of nails and the screeching of saws could be heard all day and night. A new house went up in just two hours, some complete with curtains. People came from every part of the country and lived in pre-fabricated buildings. They blended together because they all had the same goal - to win World War II by helping make the most powerful creation ever developed by science. But only a few were aware of what that creation would be - It was a secret!

1st Announcer: On September 19, **1942**, the site for this great project was chosen, and by December 31, all families that used to live in the farm land here had been moved out. The Army arrived to supervise construction of roads, railroads, utilities and the buildings to house the Manhattan Engineer District headquarters. In January **1943**, construction began on a city for a projected population of 13,000. Construction workers named the city “Oak Ridge.”

2nd Announcer: The growth of Oak Ridge was historically unique, but the way it developed was traditional: home, church, school, and then citizens’ forming interest groups. The families who came brought their cultural values.

1st Announcer: The first dormitories opened on June 15, 1943, and the first families arrived in July. On July 25, the first non-denominational church service was held in a cafeteria. Schools were being built, teachers were hired, and on October 4, the Oak Ridge Schools opened their doors to the first students at Pine Valley School. Some 637 students came that first day. It was a day of confusion, and a time for great ingenuity and “make-do.” Some rooms didn’t have enough desks; children sat on the floor. Teaching supplies were limited; there were no attendance or registration forms. As new elementary schools opened in the weeks and months following, students just moved to whichever school was the closest. No attempt was made to keep attendance records until December. The teachers taught those who were present!

2nd Announcer: On October 15, 1943, at a staff meeting at Pine Valley School, the principal asked: “How can we help these children adjust to the chaos?” Here’s the teacher, Miss Elsie Novy. She answered that question and said:

Elsie Novy: “*We need Girl Scouts—something most girls already know and love.*” That was the beginning of Girl Scouts in Oak Ridge. But it was not as simple as it sounded. General Leslie R. Groves, who headed the project, had to be convinced that Girl Scouts were necessary for *‘the war effort.’* After talking with General Groves, he and I were chauffeured to the Manhattan Engineering District in the Andrew Johnson Hotel in Knoxville. General Groves used a secure phone to talk with both the FBI in Washington, D.C., and Girl Scout council executives. Permission was granted to organize Girl Scouts

in Oak Ridge. Of course, there were restrictions. Because Oak Ridge was not on a map, Girl Scout registrations were listed as coming from the Knoxville Girl Scout Office, but they were actually sent directly to New York by the Army. Girls and adults were registered by first name only, such as two Amy's, four Mary's, one Doris, etc. This helped to keep husbands' and fathers' last names and identities as scientists a secret."

2nd Announcer: Miss Novy, what about cookie sales?

Elsie Novy: During World War II, there wasn't much sugar or butter. - The army called it rationing, - so cookies were not being baked, and all door-to-door sales were banned. It was mostly for security reasons, but it was also not to wake up sleeping shift workers.

2nd Announcer: Could you get help from Girl Scout headquarters in New York?

Elsie Novy: No, any Girl Scout correspondence had to be approved by the Army, and the Army even had to order all Girl Scout badges—until 1945 when the war was over.

2nd Announcer: How many girls joined to the newly approved Girl Scout program, Miss Novy?

Elsie Novy: When I announced the meeting, 43 Intermediate Girl Scouts (grades 5-8) came the first day. Most of them wore uniforms and had handbooks. By the next week, they became two troops, and in a month, there were four Intermediate and three Brownie troops (grades 2-4). I became leader to Troop 1. As other schools were built and more and more families moved to Oak Ridge, the Girl Scout troops multiplied just like the housing. There were cements, flat tops, dormitories, trailers, apartments and hutments. Our Girl Scouts lived in all those different kinds of houses and loved being Girl Scouts.

2nd Announcer: I understand that the first executive secretary, Evelyn Harris, is also here. Miss Harris, what do you recall about the Girl Scouts in the early days of Oak Ridge?

Evelyn Harris: Women did not have much free time. Men worked shifts and long hours. Wives were encouraged to take jobs because there was a shortage of workers, and jobs needed to be done in a hurry! This was a community of young people, with many new or young babies. The few women who might be free for volunteer work were involved in setting up their new homes. Still, the girls said they wanted to be Girl Scouts! Teachers and mothers volunteered. By January 1944, there were three elementary schools—Pine Valley, Cedar Hill and Elm Grove—and 26 Lone Troops in Oak Ridge. By 1949, ALL girls seemed to know the new Girl Scout song: "Girl Scouts Together." They sang with love and with pride. They tried to live by their Girl Scout promise and law. Girls talked about crafts and campfires and told each other about what they had done back in their hometown troops before moving to the secret city. In a short time no one would know they had come from towns where materials were easy to get, because now they were using mostly things they "found." Oak Ridge became home. Life-long friends were made, new babies were born, and very few people died.

1st Announcer: And that's the story of how Girl Scouting began in Oak Ridge, The Secret City, during the World War II Manhattan Project.

Adapted by Dot Keller from *And the Fence Came Down* by Joyce K. Maienschein and Eileen A. Neiler
Updated 2013 by Girl Scout Museum volunteers.