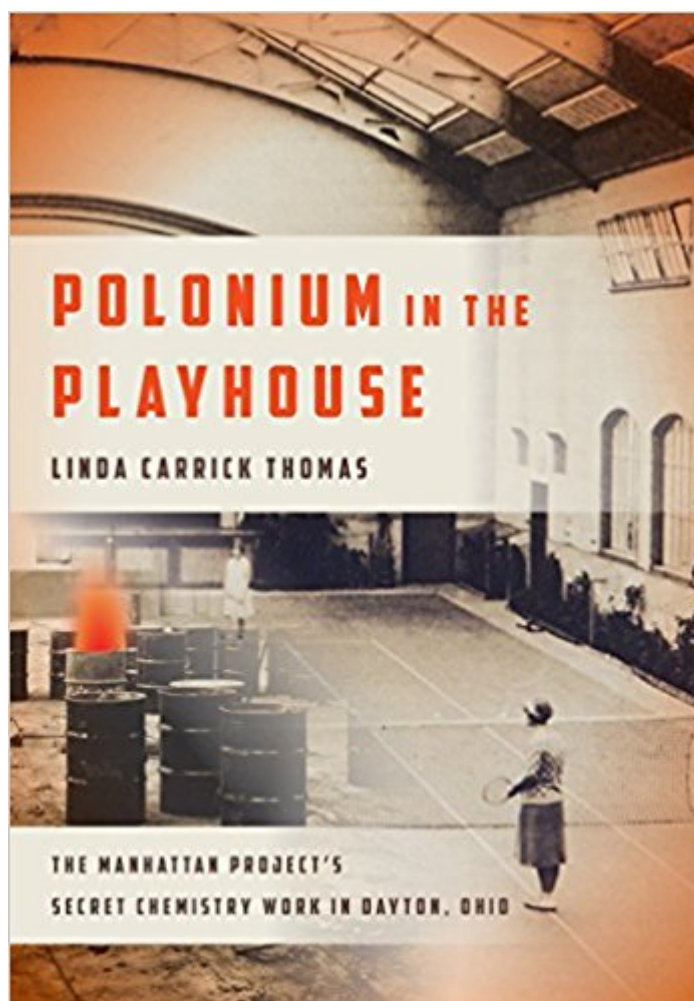


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# Polonium In The Playhouse: The Manhattan Project's Secret Chemistry Work In Dayton, Ohio



## Synopsis

At the height of the race to build an atomic bomb, an indoor tennis court in one of the Midwest's most affluent residential neighborhoods became a secret Manhattan Project laboratory. *Polonium in the Playhouse: The Manhattan Project's Secret Chemistry Work in Dayton, Ohio* presents the intriguing story of how this most unlikely site in Dayton, Ohio, became one of the most classified portions of the Manhattan Project. Seized by the War Department in 1944 for the bomb project, the Runnymede Playhouse was transformed into a polonium processing facility, providing a critical radioactive ingredient for the bomb initiator—the mechanism that triggered a chain reaction. With the help of a Soviet spy working undercover at the site, it was also key to the Soviet Union's atomic bomb program. The work was directed by industrial chemist Charles Allen Thomas who had been chosen by J. Robert Oppenheimer and General Leslie Groves to coordinate Manhattan Project chemistry and metallurgy. As one of the nation's first science administrators, Thomas was responsible for choreographing the plutonium work at Los Alamos and the Project's key laboratories. The elegant glass-roofed building belonged to his wife's family. Weaving Manhattan Project history with the life and work of the scientist, industrial leader and singing-showman Thomas, *Polonium in the Playhouse* offers a fascinating look at the vast and complicated program that changed world history and introduces the men and women who raced against time to build the initiator for the bomb.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“It’s not easy to write a book that will fascinate history buffs, science enthusiasts, and the merely curious alike, but Linda Carrick Thomas succeeds admirably in *Polonium in the Playhouse*.”

• Susan Waggoner, *Foreword Reviews* “In her highly readable *Polonium in the Playhouse*, Linda Carrick Thomas sheds light on a deliciously eccentric piece of WWII home-front history.”

• Susan Waggoner, *Foreword Reviews* “*Polonium in the Playhouse* is an engagingly written volume that deserves a place on the bookshelf of any serious student of the Manhattan Project.”

• Cameron Reed, author of *The History and Science of the Manhattan Project* “With many lively firsthand accounts, *Polonium in the Playhouse* appeals to a broad audience and makes an important contribution to Manhattan Project history. Highly recommended!”

• Cynthia C. Kelly, President, Atomic Heritage Foundation “Linda Thomas has filled an important gap in the historiography of the atomic bomb by describing the highly secret polonium project in Dayton, Ohio. The man in charge, Charles A. Thomas, is one of many unsung heroes of the Manhattan Project and has finally gotten the recognition he deserves.”

• Robert S. Norris, author of *Racing for the Bomb: General Leslie R. Groves, the Manhattan Project’s Indispensable Man*

Linda Carrick Thomas is a freelance writer and editor. A former newspaper journalist and assistant director in higher education communications, she was raised in Boston and San Diego and lives in Indiana. She is the granddaughter of Manhattan Project administrator and industrial chemist Charles Allen Thomas.

nicely detailed book on a long secret and even now barely known aspect of the Manhattan Project, the effort to design and build a part of the atomic bomb the approximate size of a golf ball.

Way too much chemistry & physics & not enough about the people involved - especially the people at The Mound and on Runnymede in Oakwood. But we are pleased to have a report on the heroes who worked on the project with no recognition & held this secret for 50 yrs. They are the true heroes of this story!

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