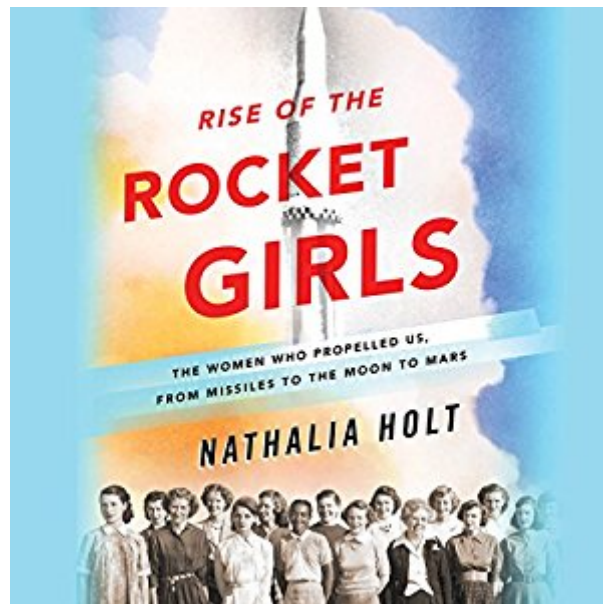


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# Rise Of The Rocket Girls: The Women Who Propelled Us, From Missiles To The Moon To Mars



## Synopsis

The riveting true story of the women who launched America into space. In the 1940s and '50s, when the newly minted Jet Propulsion Laboratory needed quick-thinking mathematicians to calculate velocities and plot trajectories, they didn't turn to male graduates. Rather, they recruited an elite group of young women who, with only pencil, paper, and mathematical prowess, transformed rocket design, helped bring about the first American satellites, and made the exploration of the solar system possible. For the first time, *Rise of the Rocket Girls* tells the stories of these women - known as "human computers" - who broke the boundaries of both gender and science. Based on extensive research and interviews with all the living members of the team, *Rise of the Rocket Girls* offers a unique perspective on the role of women in science: both where we've been and the far reaches of space to which we're heading.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

While the STEM debate rages, *Rise of the Rocket Girls* shatters the American stereotype that girls can't do numbers. *Rocket Girls* tells the story of California's JPL (Jet Propulsion Laboratory) from the early days (1940s) when the main goal was to strap a rocket onto a plane to make it go faster, to the present time of space exploration. In 1940, when the guys were shooting rockets out of a dry canyon in southern California, one of them just happened to be married to a girl who was good with numbers. Barbara calculated speed, trajectory, combustion, and other factors for rocket and propellant development, and she set the tone for future projects. As the work grew, and young JPL expanded, the number of women "computers" (they computed! The term predates the machines)

grew. The woman who was in charge of the "computers," Macie Roberts, hired only women for the department, because she wanted to preserve the camaraderie and team spirit so essential to this critical work. Thus, in a benevolent form of gender discrimination, JPL developed a sterling team of brilliant women. Macie often reminded the women, "In this job you need to look like a girl, act like a lady, think like a man, and work like a dog." As we learn about the development of rocketry, the author, Nathalia Holt, weaves in cultural developments, such as the invention of pantyhose and the rise of the women's liberation movement. She also includes snippets from the women's personal lives (like the fact that pregnancy meant instant termination--until the program realized it was dead without the women computers, and adapted flexibility to accommodate them). The women went from pencils and notebook paper to making history. Their calculations put the first man on the moon.

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