

À écouter

france  
culture

# Radium Girls, des femmes lumineuses.



"L'histoire oubliée des  
Radiums Girls"

02 fév. 2019, France Culture

*Loulou création photos France Culture.*





A vintage advertisement for 'Radium Girls' cosmetics. The central image shows a woman's profile in a classic 1920s style, with her hair styled in waves. She is looking upwards and to the right. In the foreground, there are two cosmetic products: a tube of cream and a round tin. The tube is labeled 'CRÈME ALPHABETIQUE' and 'PARIS'. The tin is labeled 'CRÈME' and 'PARIS'. The background is a textured, golden-brown color. The words 'RADIUM GIRLS' are written in a large, stylized, outlined font on the right side of the image. The entire advertisement is framed by a gold border.



Qui se souvient, enfant, avoir scruté longuement dans le noir les chiffres lumineux d'un cadran de montre ou de réveil, dont l'effet magique faisait oublier l'heure donnée ?









Grace Fryer meurt en 1933  
mystérieusement  
et dans la souffrance





Autour de sa tombe  
encore aujourd'hui  
la radioactivité s'envole

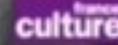




Elle travaillait  
dans une usine  
d'horloges phosphorescentes



et des dizaines  
d'autres ouvrières  
sont mortes comme elle

The logo for France Culture, consisting of a purple square with the words "france culture" in white lowercase letters.A black and white photograph of several young women, the Radium Girls, working in a laboratory. They are wearing aprons and are focused on their work, which involves handling small containers and equipment. The scene is dimly lit, emphasizing the industrial and scientific nature of their work.

Voici la  
scandaleuse  
histoire des  
Radium Girls





Quand Marie et  
Pierre Curie découvrent  
le radium en 1898





france  
culture

on n'en connaît  
pas encore les  
dangers





france  
culture

CRÈME POUDDRE  
**THO-RADIA**  
EMBELEISSANTES PARCE QUE CURATIVES  
à base de Thorium et de radium selon la formule du  
1923 DOCTEUR ALFRED CURIE

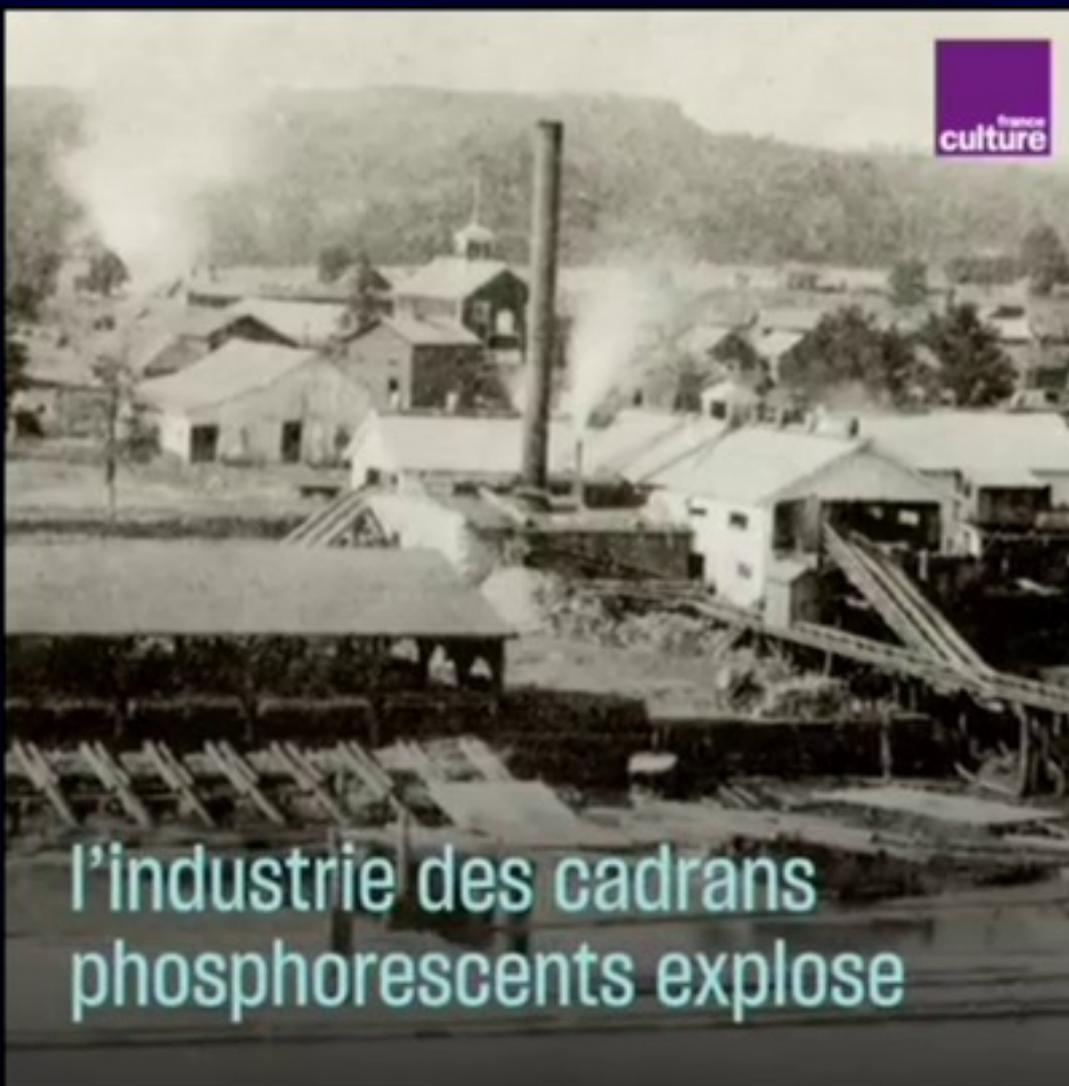


son utilisation se propage  
à tout type de produits



Aux États-Unis,  
pendant la  
1<sup>re</sup> Guerre mondiale





l'industrie des cadrans  
phosphorescents explose



A black and white photograph of a large classroom filled with students sitting at their desks. The students are dressed in early 20th-century attire. The classroom has rows of desks and a chalkboard in the background.

dans les années 1920  
près de 4 000 femmes  
dont Grace, y sont employées



Leur travail ?





Peindre méticuleusement  
près de 250 cadrans par jour



The image shows a book cover for 'The Radium Girls' by Kate Moore. The cover features a black and white photograph of a woman in a dark, heavy coat, possibly in a historical setting. The text is in a light blue or teal color. A purple square with the 'france culture' logo is in the top right. A white audio waveform is overlaid on the bottom half of the cover. The entire cover is framed by a dark blue background with ornate, golden, scrollwork-like borders on the left and right sides.

Kate Moore  
Écrivaine, "The Radium Girls"

france  
culture

La compagnie disait d'effiler  
son pinceau entre ses lèvres



Kate Moore  
Écrivaine, "The Radium Girls"

france  
culture



pour faire une pointe fine.



Kate Moore  
Écrivaine, "The Radium Girls"

france  
culture



Toutes les Radiums Girls peignaient  
leur cadran de la sorte donc

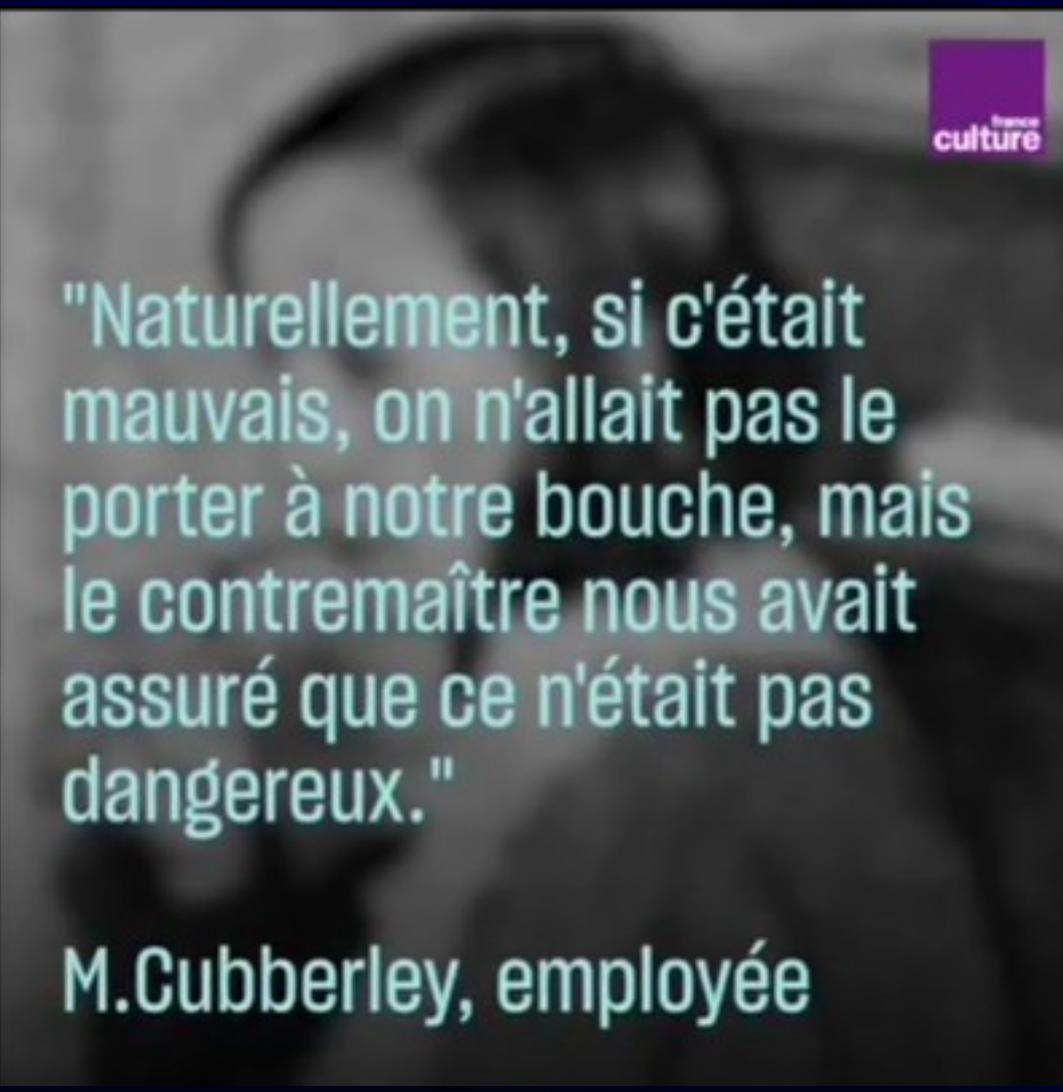




Kate Moore  
Ecrivaine, "The Radium Girls"

france  
culture

elles ingéraient cette peinture radioactive  
en effilant leur pinceau entre leurs lèvres.

A blurred, grayscale image of a person's face, likely a woman, serving as the background for the text.

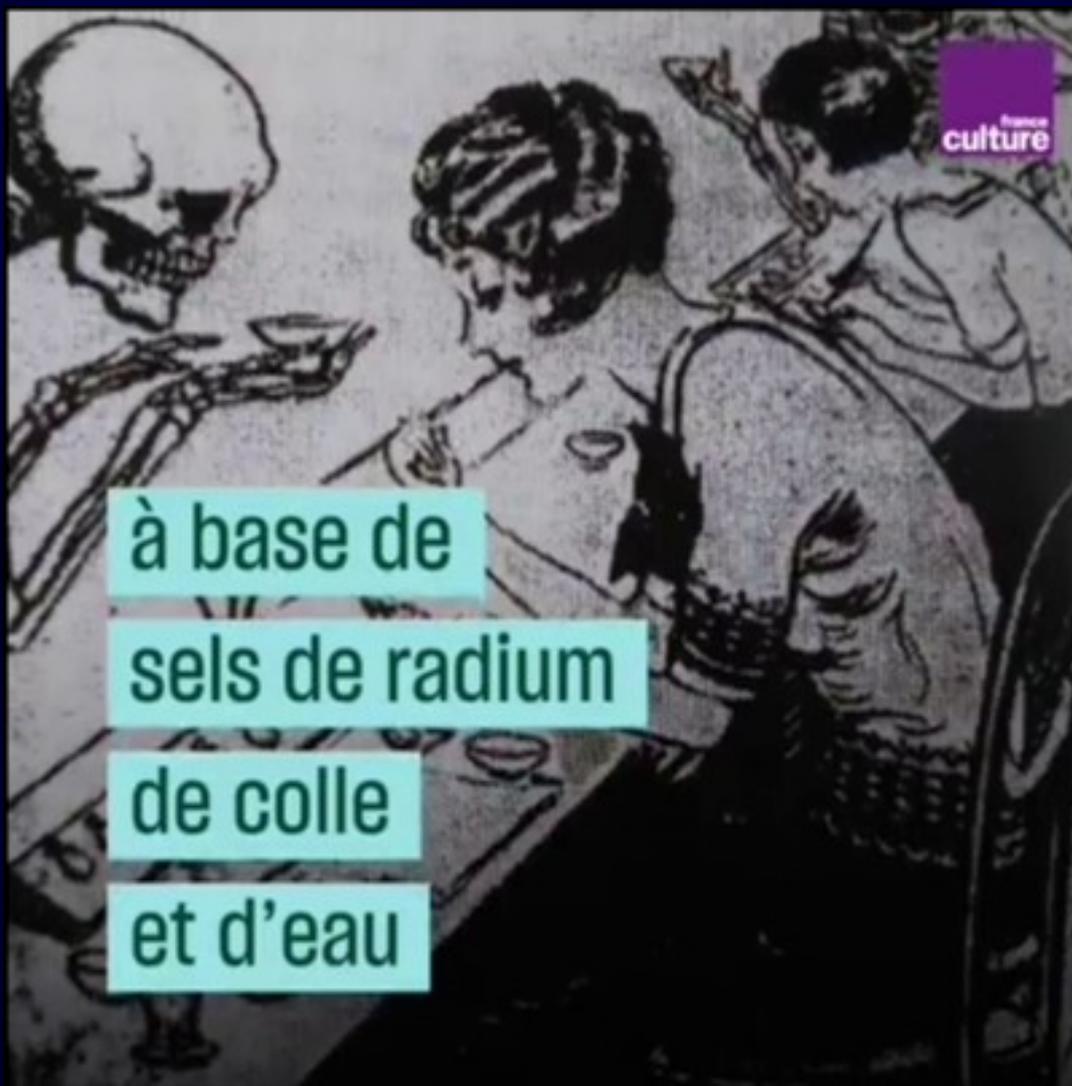
"Naturellement, si c'était mauvais, on n'allait pas le porter à notre bouche, mais le contremaître nous avait assuré que ce n'était pas dangereux."

M.Cubberley, employée









à base de  
sels de radium  
de colle  
et d'eau



A vintage black and white photograph of a woman with a short, curly bob haircut, wearing a dark, sleeveless dress with a large floral corsage on her left shoulder. She is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. The image is semi-transparent and serves as a background for the text.

la poudre scintillante  
se dépose sur leurs mains,  
leurs cheveux, leurs épaules



Kate Moore  
Écrivaine, "The Radium Girls"

france  
culture



On les appelaient les "revenantes"



Kate Moore  
Écrivaine, *The Radium Girls*

france  
culture



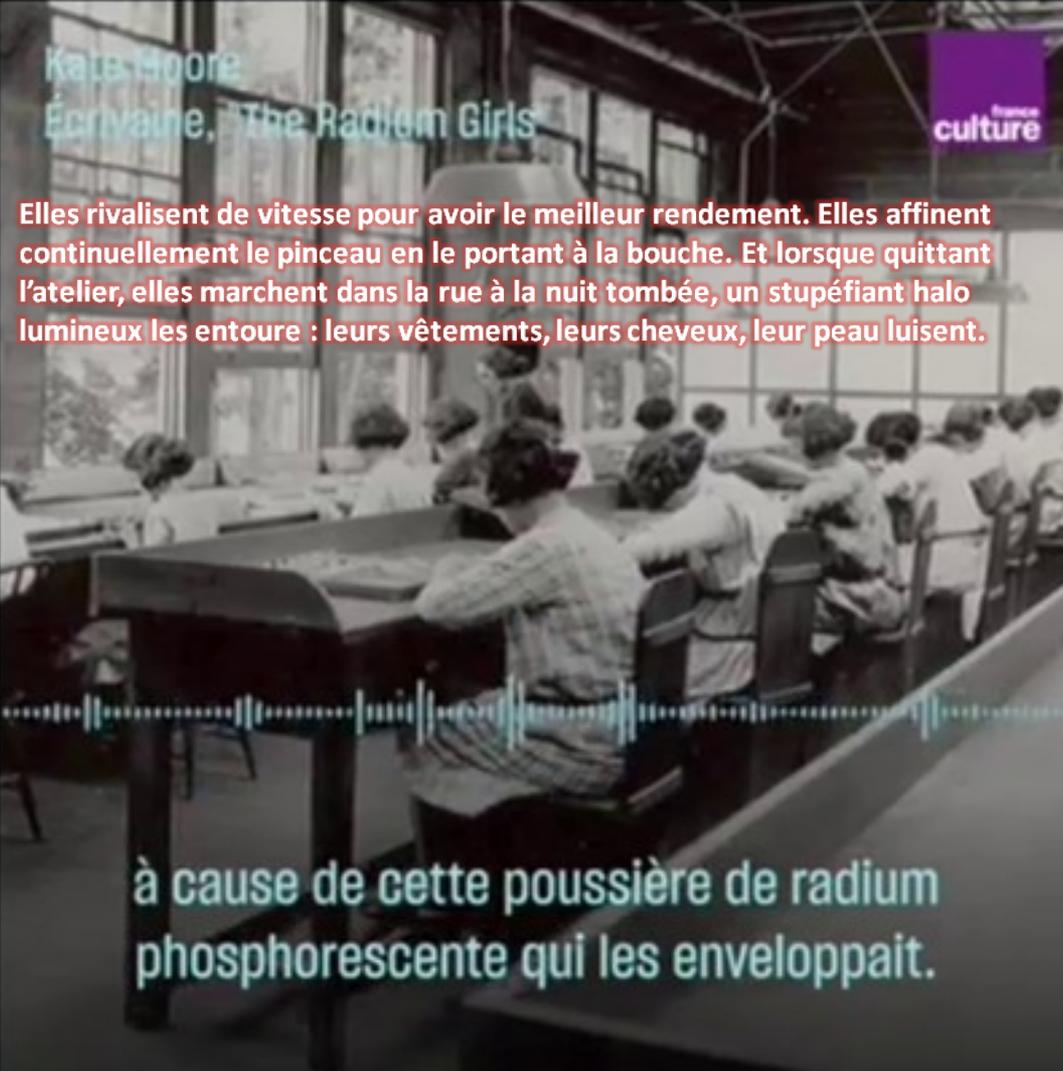
parce que quand elles  
rentraient à pied du travail

Kate Moore  
Écrivaine, "The Radium Girls"

france  
culture

elles luisaient comme des esprits





Kate Moore  
Écrivaine, "The Radium Girls"

france  
culture

Elles rivalisent de vitesse pour avoir le meilleur rendement. Elles affinent continuellement le pinceau en le portant à la bouche. Et lorsque quittant l'atelier, elles marchent dans la rue à la nuit tombée, un stupéfiant halo lumineux les entoure : leurs vêtements, leurs cheveux, leur peau luisent.



à cause de cette poussière de radium  
phosphorescente qui les enveloppait.

Publicité pour un produit capillaire au radium, 1924.







La santé de Grace  
et de ses collègues  
se détériore

A black and white portrait of a woman with dark, wavy hair, wearing a dark dress and a pearl necklace. The image is partially obscured by text boxes.

mal de dents

fracture spontanée des os

douleur articulaire atroce

anémie

nécrose...





le radium se fixe sur  
les os et les désintègre





la colonne vertébrale  
de Grace Fryer est  
**pulvérisée**





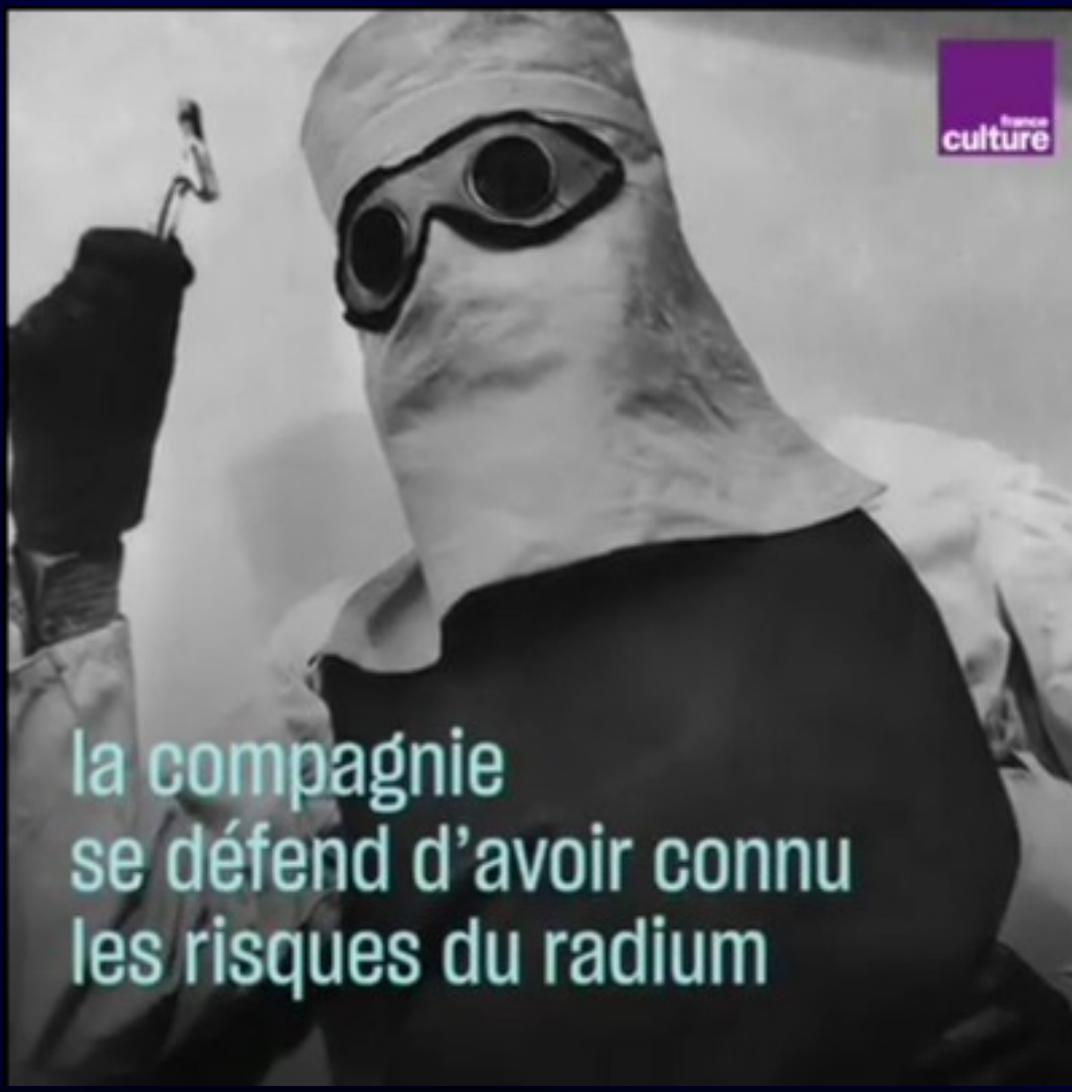
les cancers  
se multiplient





notamment,  
celui de la mâchoire  
chez des dizaines d'ouvrières





la compagnie  
se défend d'avoir connu  
les risques du radium





bien que les cadres  
bénéficient, eux,  
de mesures de protection





En quelques années,  
beaucoup d'ouvrières  
meurent



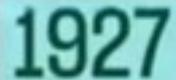
A black and white photograph showing a woman in a dark, patterned dress being held or supported by several men in suits. The woman's eyes are closed, and she appears to be in a state of distress or unconsciousness. The men are looking down at her with serious expressions. The background is slightly blurred, suggesting an indoor setting.

la plupart sont trop  
malades pour entamer  
une procédure judiciaire

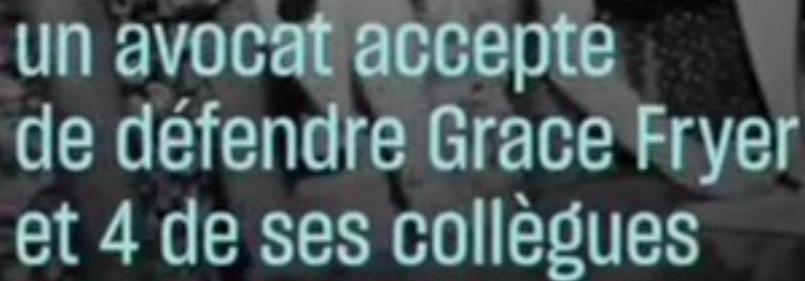


A black and white historical photograph of a courtroom. Several men in 19th-century attire are seated at a long wooden bench. In the foreground, a group of men in dark suits stands with their backs to the camera, looking towards the bench. The room has ornate wood paneling.

une loi de prescription  
les empêche de  
porter plainte

A light blue rectangular box containing the year "1927" in a bold, white, sans-serif font.

1927

The main text of the slide, "un avocat accepte de défendre Grace Fryer et 4 de ses collègues", is written in a light blue, sans-serif font. It is positioned over a dark, semi-transparent background that shows a black and white photograph of five women in 1920s fashion.

un avocat accepte  
de défendre Grace Fryer  
et 4 de ses collègues



france  
culture

la compagnie insinüe  
que les ouvrières ont  
**la syphilis**



et tente de prouver  
l'innocuité du radium  
par tous les moyens



Jean-Marc Cosset  
Radiothérapeute



Des gens qui étaient manifestement  
en conflit d'intérêt sont venus témoigner



Jean-Marc Cosset  
Radiothérapeute



comme quoi il n'y avait pas de danger.



Jean-Marc Cosset  
Radiothérapeute



Mais en creusant un peu on s'apercevait  
que c'étaient des vrais scientifiques





france  
culture

qu'ils avaient un laboratoire



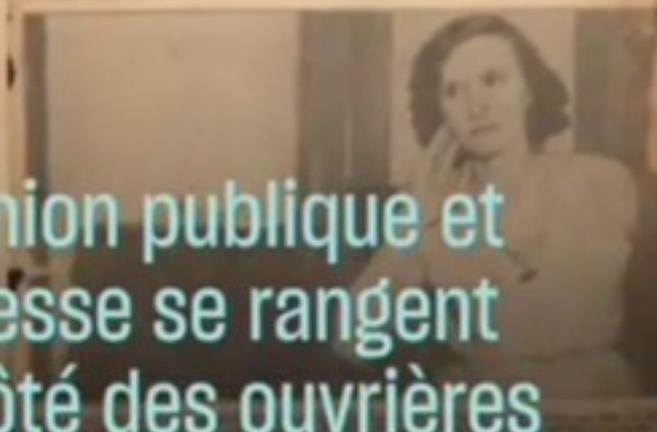


france  
culture

mais que le laboratoire était  
largement payé par la Radium Company.

367.787 DAILY TIMES

# RADIUM DEATH ON RAMPAGE!



L'opinion publique et  
la presse se rangent  
du côté des ouvrières



# To Women Who Know They Soon Will Die

Victims of Radium Poison  
Keep Their Faith as  
Death Nears

By GLADYS ARNE

NEWARK, N. J., June 1 (NEA)—What would you do if you had been told by medical experts that you had only one year to live?

Five young women of New Jersey are living their answer to that question.

They are the victims of radium poisoning now suing the United States Radium corporation, of Orange, N. J., for \$25,000 each on the ground they were fatally poisoned while working with radium products.

### Soleas of Religion

While they wait they are proving that, when death looks just around the corner, one turns instinctively to the simple comforts of home, family, work, play, friends and the solace of religious faith, rather than to unusual deeds or philosophies.

Two of them, Miss Katherine Bohann, of Newark, and Miss Olive Fryer, of Orange, are unmarried.

Katherine Bohann is 25. Her eyes are blind and her spotted hair is falling out.

"Katherine is a wonderful woman," says Gladys Arne, who has written the story. "She has a very strong faith in God."

### Was Not Worried

"I was not worried," she says. "I was just glad to be able to do my work."



One Girl Writes  
Another Holds  
Job in Bank

one comfort me. I think about such things more than I use to.

### She Writes Poetry

"Now I'm going to tell you a secret—another thing that helps me."

She brought from a drawer a little notebook.

"Since I've been sick I've been writing poetry. Not to publish. Just for myself. Of course I have not much education. I don't suppose it's any good. See?"

She opened it. It was filled with verses, painstakingly inscribed in ink in a school girl hand.

Many were in a religious vein; one was entitled, "Mary," and another "God's Love." But one was about the circus callings, "singling out of key as it trundles down the street."

There was another in "Spring," and one called "Happiness." The last verse went:

"Happiness is in the heart;

It is not in costly clothes.

It is found in helping others

And in serene love."

"What do you mean by serene love, Katherine?"

### Would Help Others

"Why I mean helping others without getting anything back. You need what I would do with my money if I got it. I guess I'd pay the bill, see. We have power. And if there's some left, I'd like to help people who have suffered like me. Don't you've suffered you are hard about me. You have to have it

les 5 Radiums Girls  
obtiennent des  
compensations financières...





### Death News

By GLADYS ANNE

NEWARK, N. J., June 1 (NBA)—What would you do if you had been told by medical experts that you had only one year to live?

Five young women of New Jersey are living their answers to that question.

They are the victims of radium poisoning now being the United States Radium corporation, of Orange, N. J., for \$25,000 each on the ground they were fatally poisoned while working with radium products.

#### Sales of Religion

While they wait they are proving that, when death lurks just around the corner, one turns instinctively to the simple comforts of home, family, work, play, friends and the solace of religious faith, rather than to cerebral deeds or philosophies.

Two of them, Miss Katherine Schuch, of Newark, and Miss Grace Feyer, of Orange, are unmarried.

Katherine Schuch is 24. Her eyes are vivid blue and her tumbled hair is silky red. Pain has given her a pallid skin. She has a slim, smart figure.

"Katherine wears clothes well," her friends used to say. "Katherine's a wonderful dancer." But now she walks with a heavy, dragging step, supporting herself by clenching chair or table.

#### Was War Worker

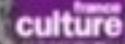
"My mother was proud of me," she told me. "She wanted me to have a good education and become a school teacher. She is dead now. She died when she learned what happened to me. Oh, many times we were told that we had only one year to live."



# à l'amiable

### JOB IN DARK

ery comfort me, I think things more than I can  
She Writes P



"Now I'm going to tell you another thing that she brought from a drawer in a little notebook.

"Since I've been sick I've been writing poetry. Not to publish. Just for myself. Of course I have not much education. I don't suppose it's any good. See?"

She opened it. It was filled with verses, painstakingly inscribed in ink in a school girl hand.

Many were in a religious vein; one was entitled, "Mary," and another "God's Love." But one was about the circus calliope, "singing out of key as it trundles down the street."

There was another in "Spring," and one called "Happiness." The last verse went:

"Happiness is in the heart;  
It is not in outer clothes.

It is found in helping others  
And in servile love."

"What do you mean by servile love, Katherine?"

#### Would Help Others

"Why I mean helping others without getting anything back. You asked what I would do with my money if I got it. I guess I'd pay the bills, first. We have plenty. But if there's some left, I'd like to help people who have suffered like me. Until you've suffered you are hard about pain. You have to have it yourself to sympathize."

Grace Feyer, the heroine among the Katherine, works in a bank in Newark and holds a passbook in her lap.

She is 25. Her hair is dark, her eyes deep brown. The disease is creeping the round contours of her face. She wears a blouse from her trunk and another on her feet, and she had 12 operations on her joints.

She was quite discouraged. The doctors grow in vain, without any. But the girl sits and sings. She sings, "Sweet Home," "The Star Spangled Banner," "The Rose Tree," "The Bird Song," "The Rose Tree," "The Bird Song," "The Rose Tree," "The Bird Song."





France  
culture

...ace of  
...o un-  
...herine  
...Grace  
...ed.  
...eyes  
...hair  
...her a  
...smart  
...her  
...he's a  
...she  
...step,  
...chair  
...me."  
...he to  
...come  
...no  
...what  
...time  
...ad-

It  
A  
"W  
Kathe  
"W  
out  
asked  
money  
bills,  
there  
people  
Until  
about  
yours  
Gra  
Kathe  
ark at  
She  
eyes  
havr  
cheek

toutes les plaignantes  
meurent peu après





France  
culture

Grace Freyer  
avait 34 ans



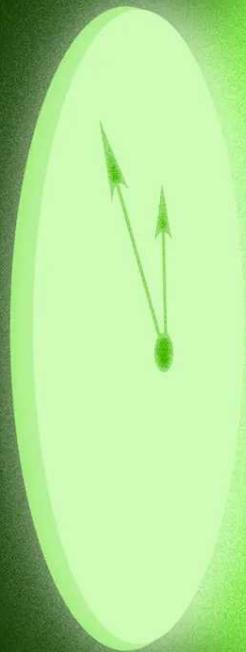


Le retentissement médiatique  
du procès a fait avancer  
les droits des travailleurs





Un documentaire de Marie Chartron, réalisé par Laurent Paulré. Archives INA :



LOULOU'S PPS

*loulou créations*

<https://loulouspps.biz/>