

LUMINOUS LIVES,  
REMARKABLE  
LEGACY:  
THE RADIUM GIRLS' FIGHT FOR  
WORKPLACE RIGHTS AND  
EMPLOYER RESPONSIBILITIES

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GROUP WEBSITE

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Thrilled to participate in NHD, when the 2024-2025 theme, Rights and Responsibilities came out we immediately began searching for a related topic. During our preliminary research, we viewed numerous articles that had theme-related topics. We stumbled upon the Radium Girls, and their significant contribution to workplace safety laws. They were young female laborers who painted watch dials to make them glow in the dark, but ingested lethal amounts of radioactive paint and suffered severe occupational illnesses due to their employers' negligence. After deliberating, we settled on this topic.

To acquire background knowledge, we cast a wide net, looking through books, websites, and documentaries about the Radium Girls' story, as well as the moral rights and responsibilities of the women and their employers. Websites such as Chronicling America and the Library of Congress gave us access to primary sources that we incorporated through videos, quotes and pictures. Additionally, we reached out to the Waterbury Mattatuck Museum inquiring about artifacts from the Waterbury, Connecticut Radium Girls. To gain more perspectives and strengthen our argument, we conducted a variety of different interviews that gave us deeper insight into the Radium Girls' story.

We decided to showcase the tragic story of the 'Radium Girls' through a website, which allowed us to include all sorts of media, quotes, pictures, and information. We divided our work into parts, establishing an organized project. We constructed a plan, researched using both primary and secondary sources, created a detailed draft, and designed and polished our website. We worked carefully ensuring a well-built website that would grab the attention of readers, and portray our topic in a smooth, straightforward manner. Building a team website has proven to be fun, as we enjoyed creating a project about a remarkable event in history. After receiving relevant feedback from the judges, we implemented additional perspectives and student voices

throughout. Furthermore, we mentioned recent workplaces that violated safety precautions, showing that more work regarding their legacy is needed.

The Radium Girls relates to *Rights & Responsibilities*. It emphasizes the responsibilities that the employers should uphold, and the rights that the employees are entitled to. The women's unsafe working conditions and their resulting health problems were a pivotal turning point in workplace safety, leading to occupational safety protocols and laws that protect employees against work related harm. Although the Radium Girls did not have the rights that they were supposed to have, the moral rights of these young women included working in a safe environment protected by safety protocols and equipment. Their employers did not fulfill their responsibility, misled the Radium Girls, and were held accountable for providing an unsafe workplace with dangerous conditions.

Despite the experiences of the Radium Girls, they paved the way, allowing workers in the medical and industrial fields today to have strict and clearly defined rights and a safe environment with enforced safety protocols. They fought for justice, earned compensation and led to the development of laws, regulations, companies, and organizations such as the OSHA, which mandate safety guidelines across industries.