

Port Orford's 1959 Fourth of July  
"Battle of the Radioactive Barrel":  
A Snapshot of the Nuclear Uncanny in  
Oregon

Linda Richards, History of Science  
Graduate Program  
Oregon State University  
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Oregon Counts Fatalities in Weekend

Includes Four in Traffic, Auto Collision and Bridge Mishap

Fourth of July... Fatalities... Traffic... Auto Collision... Bridge Mishap

Road Trend Encouraging

The nation's holiday death toll climbed steadily Saturday... Road Trend Encouraging

Fans at Fire

WYLLIE, Calif. (AP)—The gusts swept the high dry Sierra Nevada night and third straight day of almost a month's National Forest fire activity.

Light Showers, Clouds Forecast

Clouds and light showers are expected over the Oregon coast... Light Showers, Clouds Forecast

Nationalist Jet Victory Claimed

YAPK (AP)—Nationalist Chinese claimed a plane shot down by Communist Chinese... Nationalist Jet Victory Claimed

Day-Children in and Married Pros

Day-Children in and Married Pros... Oregon's children and married prospects

Stubborn Long Hits Vote Trail

Governor Ignores Doctors' Warning, Flies Over State

Lake Arthur, La. (AP)—Louisiana Gov. Earl K. Long drove himself, without money Saturday through a grating... Stubborn Long Hits Vote Trail

Radioactive Waste in Drum Washes Ashore Near Battle Rock State Park

Waste from 'Battle of the Berrys' Saturday as Coast Guardsmen closed off the beach while they investigated a barrel of radioactive waste.

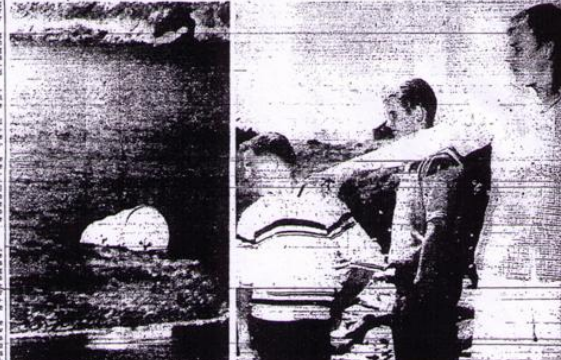
Nov Finds Beach Clear of Atomic Contamination

PORT OGDON (Special)—A drum believed to contain radioactive waste washed ashore Saturday on the beach in Battle Rock... Nov Finds Beach Clear of Atomic Contamination

Radioactive Waste in Drum Washes Ashore Near Battle Rock State Park



Battle of Battle Rock, headline event of Port Ogdon's July Fourth celebration, turned into 'Battle of the Berrys' Saturday as Coast Guardsmen closed off the beach while they investigated a barrel of radioactive waste.

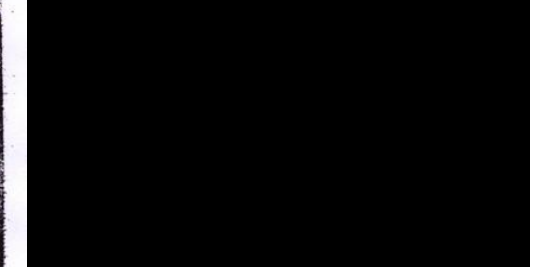


Paul W. Pimenta of Oak Bay World, 1888 before guests returned waves in beach. Above, it's a drum of radioactive waste washing in surf at low tide near Battle Rock. State International watching signs printed on drum.

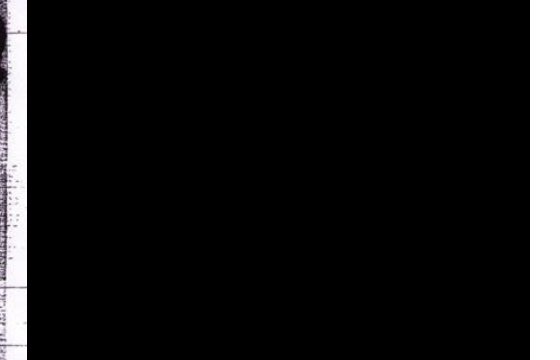


Richard Jack Yager, Oak Bay World, stands near with... Danger Label Painted

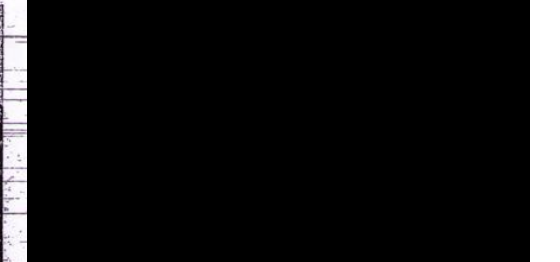
Radioactive Waste in Drum Washes Ashore Near Battle Rock State Park



left, Battle Rock field is all to right of picture. Lodge poles be foreground were used by Indians for ropes in Coastside observance of Battle of Battle Rock, which was fought on schedule after beach and outside of barrel was declared by heavy teams to be uncontaminated.



Richard Jack Yager, Oak Bay World, stands near with... Danger Label Painted



Danger Label Painted

The Sunday Oregonian

# Parade

A stirring message for  
Independence Day

by JAMES B. CONANT

page 1

How to dress your husband

page 12



July 5, 1959  
REG. U.S. PAT. OFF.

Dr. Conant writes an open letter to America's grandchildren



Carefree, exuberant, healthy, our youngsters have some vital decisions to make in the future.

## The Hands That Hold Freedom

By CHARLES VAN DEUSEN

*Healthier, better educated,  
and with more liberty than  
any of its predecessors,  
American youth is the guardian  
of our freedom. How much  
do we know about our children?*

"ANN'S ALWAYS ON the telephone! If I want to make a call, I have to go around the corner to a pay booth!"

"Look," I said, "I work-at-a-job-all-day! I don't see why I should have to come home and do your 'arithmetic!'"

"You think she'd even make her own bed? Not our Sally?"

And so on, ad infinitum.

Wherever you go, you hear the same thing: all proving that youth today has become the most popular subject of adult conversation.

Back of the talk lie some urgent questions: What sort of children are we raising? Come the inevitable time when they find themselves grown up, will they

be able to act grown-up? Of prime importance: will they be trustworthy custodians of our national heritage especially of that most precious of all our possessions, the American ideal of freedom?

Independence Day is dedicated to freedom, and despite the oratory traditionally lavished on it, the ideal itself always manages to survive, untarnished.

The reason, no doubt, is that people love most what they work, struggle and suffer for most.

As a nation, we have devoted a lot of work and suffering to freedom. Every major war we have ever fought, every major (Continued on following page)

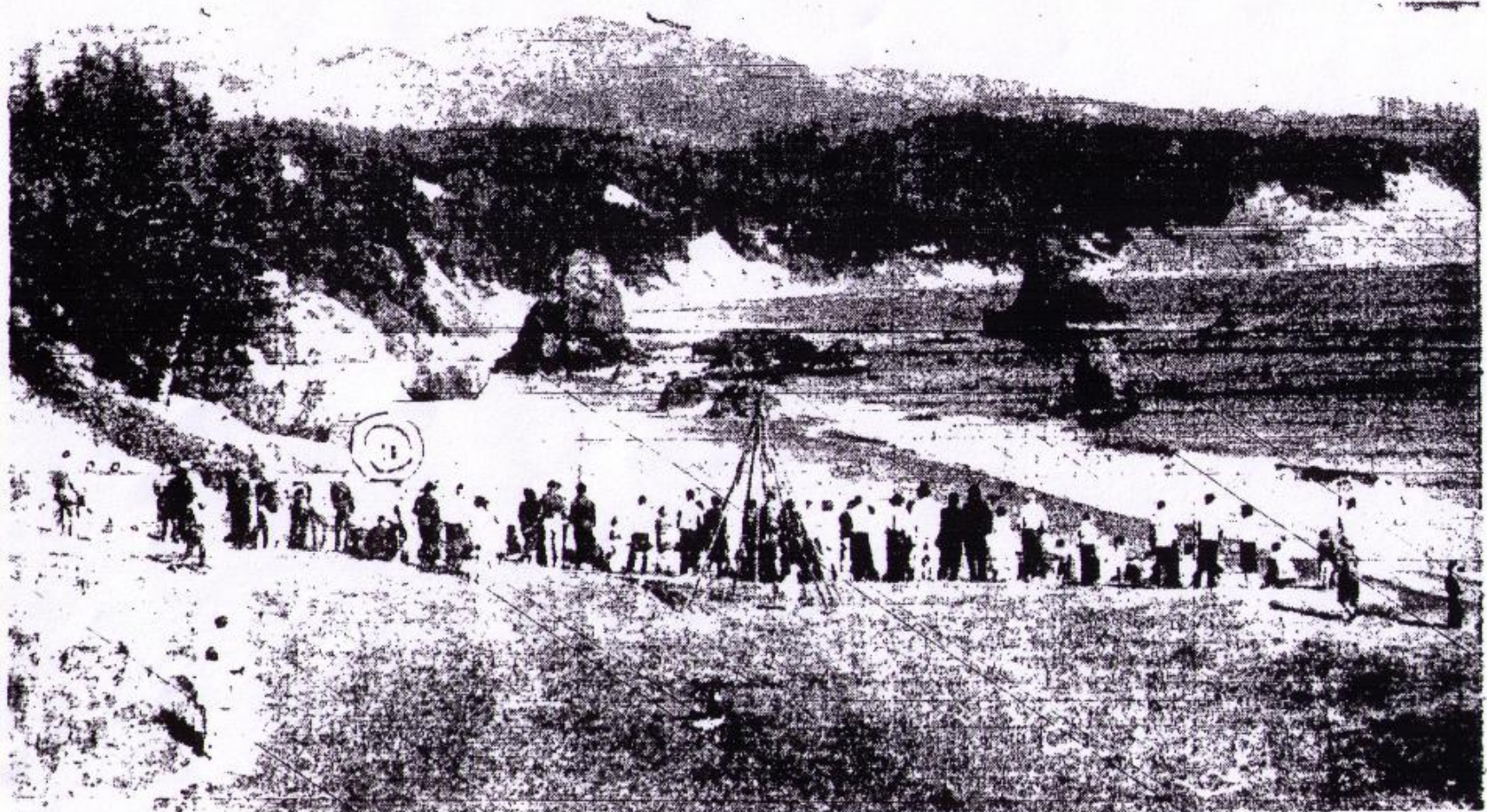


**SUNDAY SCHOOLS** drew a record enrollment of 40,359,772 children in 1958. In so doing, they underlined the ringing words of the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag: "One Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."



**SCIENCE**, with its dizzy lengthening vistas into the unknown, poses the great challenge to today's youth. Responding to it, over 300,000 boys and girls last year displayed their projects at science fairs.

# Radioactive Waste in Drum Washes Ashore Near Battle Rock State Park



Battle of Battle Rock, headline event of Port Orford's July Fourth celebration, turned into "Battle of the Barrel" Saturday as Coast Guardsmen closed off the beach while they investigated a barrel of radioactive waste. Crowds swarmed over high points to watch Coast Guardsmen, shown in circle at

left. Battle Rock itself is off to right of picture. Lodge poles in foreground were used by Indians for tepee in Centennial observance of Battle of Battle Rock, which was fought on schedule after beach and outside of barrel were declared by Navy team to be uncontaminated.

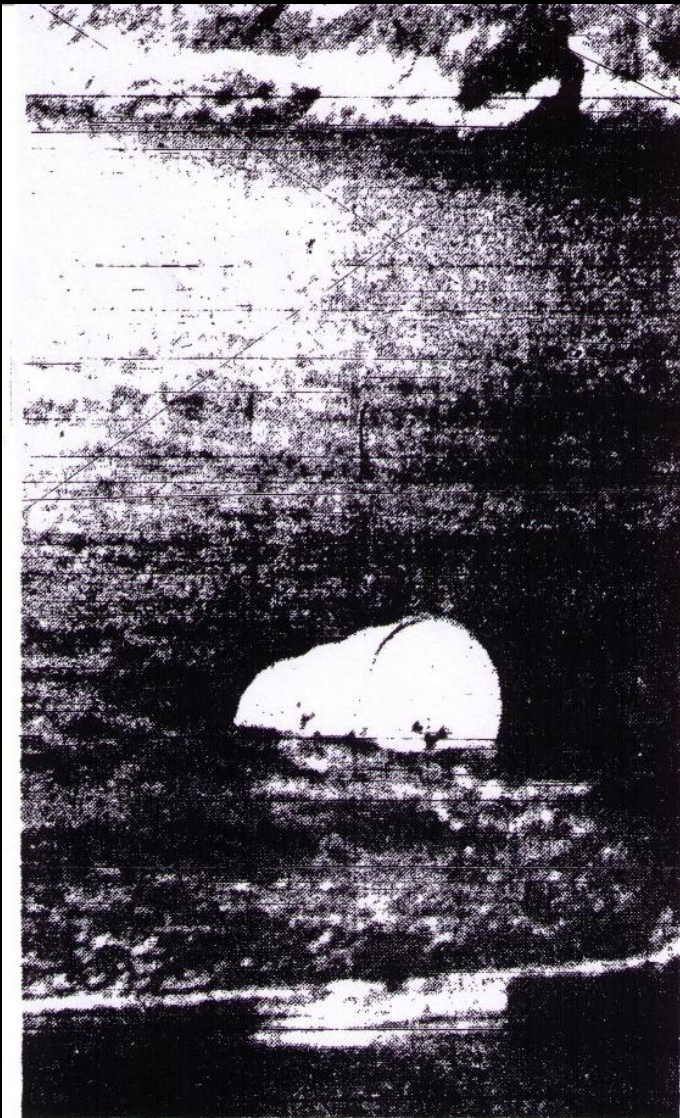
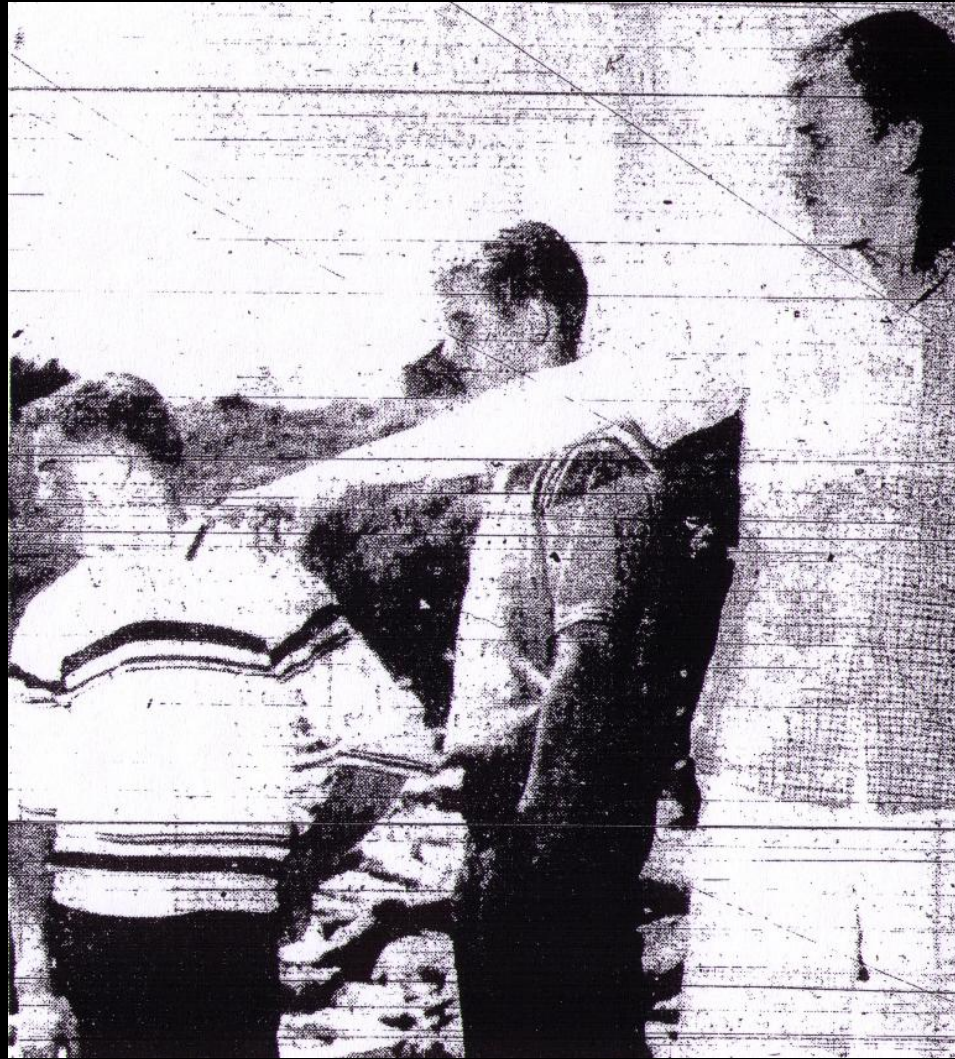


Photo by Bob Frenette of Coos Bay World, taken before guards restricted access to beach, shows 55-gallon drum of radioactive waste wallowing in surf at the foot of Battle Rock. Note international warning signs painted on drum.





Seabee Jack Yager, Coos Bay, stands guard while Ordnanceman 1/C D. E. Waste and Gunner H. L. Jones Jr., in special gear, head for beach to remove drum. (Falconer Photos)

## Finder of Barrel Buries Clothing

See Story on Page 1, Also

PORT ORFORD (Special)—  
"I hope I'm not hot. I buried  
my clothes like they told me  
to."

That was the excited reac-  
tion of Ronald Rose, 16, first  
youth to sight the mysterious  
drum as it floated into the  
beach at the base of Battle  
Rock early the morning of the  
Fourth of July.

"I slept here, overlooking  
the beach, along with Phil  
Paris, 16, and Charles Saxton  
Jr., 16," Rose explained. "I  
got up about 6 o'clock and  
looked out toward the rock. I  
saw this white drum floating in  
the deep water just off the  
shelf of the beach. Then I  
called the other guys and we  
went down to look it over.

"By that time this big white  
55-gallon drum had rolled onto  
the beach in the surf. I tried  
to push it, but it was too  
heavy," Rose said.

Rose then notified the city  
police, who called the Coast  
Guard. Rose was sent to Dr.  
Donald S. Crane, who advised  
him to bury his clothes and  
take a shower, which he did.

Coast Guardsmen David  
Sprague and Joe Sabia, both  
boatswain's mates, second  
class, then waded into the surf  
and hooked a line around the  
drum, which was hauled out  
onto the beach by Chief Boats-  
wain's Mate Lindberg Swales.

Swales also was ordered back  
to the Port Orford life guard

station to change his clothes  
and take a thorough shower.

The Coast Guardsmen and  
the boys agreed that the barrel  
looked like "the real thing."

"It is about half-full of some  
liquid," said Swales. "It ap-  
pears to be an ordinary 55-gal-  
lon oil drum, with both bungs  
tightened down, sealed with  
whitelead, and painted over  
carefully. It looks like a pro-  
fessional job. The paint is new  
and shows no signs of fading.  
It appears to be newly painted,  
but I don't know how long it  
might have been in the ocean."

Ensign Jerry Zinser and a  
party from the Coast Guard  
Cutter Modoc at Coos Bay ar-  
rived on the scene at noon with  
a Navy geiger counter, which  
showed about the same read-  
ings as local geiger counters,  
from 15 to 50 milli-roentgens  
per hour. Ens. Zinser said he  
thought this level of radioac-  
tivity was not dangerous, but  
he decided to bar the public  
from the beach until more suit-  
able meters could be flown  
from Seattle.

Ted Leach, boatswain's mate  
1st class, was one of those  
who handled the drum. Geiger  
counter readings later showed  
traces of radioactivity on  
Leach, Lindberg Swales, ap-  
prentice seamen, and on ten  
spectators who had ap-  
proached the drum before  
Coast Guardsmen posted a  
guard on Battle Rock Park.

The duty officer at the Han-  
ford Atomic Works at Rich-

land, Wash., said the Hanford  
Works does not dump radioac-  
tive waste at sea as far as he  
knows.

James Cannon, information  
officer for the Atomic Energy  
Commission in Washington,  
D.C., said several private firms  
are licensed as disposal agents  
to pick up "low level" radio-  
active waste from hospitals  
and commercial firms using  
radioactive isotope processes  
and dispose of it at sea in bar-  
rels.

(AEC radioactive waste dis-  
posal at San Francisco uses  
55-gallon drums, but they are  
either painted yellow or not  
painted at all, said Rodney  
Southworth, information offi-  
cer at the AEC operations of-  
fice there. The drums are not  
painted white.

(Southworth said AEC has  
private agencies licensed to  
dispose of low-level radioactive  
waste by dumping at sea, but  
that no West Coast licensee has  
given the required notification  
of intent to make such disposal.

(Dr. Arthur Livermore, pro-  
fessor of chemistry at Reed  
College, said that institution's  
atomic materials waste is  
stored at the college, and none  
has been disposed of.)

## 'Atomic' Barrel Believed Empty

POST OXFORD (Special)—  
A Rear admiral speculated  
Sunday night that British  
fleet's atomic barrels were  
likely an empty carriage  
which dropped with a loud  
bang.

The rear admiral, Frank T.  
Watkins, is commander of the  
10th Naval District. He said  
in Seattle that he had notified  
the Atomic Energy commis-  
sion about the barrel and was  
add it didn't sound like some-  
thing that belongs to the  
according to the Associated  
Press.

The drum washed onto the  
beach about 5 a.m. Saturday,  
after a 400-ton ship, the TCG  
Dolphin, had been struck by the  
bomb.

# Thank you for being here.

Thank you also to those without whom I would not be here, especially Professor Mary Jo Nye and William Robbins who encouraged me to tell this story. Thank you to the archivists at OSU University Archives Tiah Edmunson-Morton, Karl McCreary, Larry Landis, and Elizabeth Nielsen; Cliff Mead and his wonderful staff at the OSU Ava Helen and Linus Pauling Special Collections; my graduate mentors Tina Schweickert, Nick Blanchard, and Mason Tattersall; Professor Carmel Finley; and the staff at the History Office, Elissa Curcio, Patty Curtis, and Mariae Hunter.