

The Epidemic of Yawning Falls Question Sheet

1. How did the earliest Epidemic victims likely contract the disease?

* Well 6 was contaminated. Those who fell ill first lived directly around the well or had relatives around the well.

2. Why did so many of McCarthy's employees become ill?

* He employed mostly Catholics, who were exposed to the illness during communion.

3. Virgil Cantwell became ill in June. How would he have been exposed to the disease?

* His child contracted the disease at school from the drinking pails.

4. Rose George of 65 Middle Street and her younger siblings, Oscar and Francisca, had the disease in April. How did they most likely contract it?

* Judging by surnames, most of their relatives live around Well 6. They were likely exposed on a visit.

5. Not a single child under the age of 7 was ill with the disease during the month of May. How can you explain that?

* All victims were exposed in one of two ways. Drinking of the contaminated water of Well 6 or exposure to saliva of someone who had been incubating the disease for almost four weeks. Because infants do not take communion or use the school drinking pails, they could have only contracted it from the contaminated water in April or someone who'd contracted it from communion or drinking pails in April and been incubating it for almost a month; this puts the exposure of the child in May, and the four weeks of incubation would result in the child being ill in June.