

The Epidemic of Yawning Falls Mapping Activity

Recommended for High School, Advanced Placement or equivalent

~1 Hour

Groups of 6 students

Items needed for each group:

- Yellow, Pink, Purple, Red, Blue, Green, Orange, Brown, Black markers
- 2 transparencies
- 8 paper clips
- 1 Questions sheet (<https://goo.gl/7mWePg>)
- 1 set of "Primary Source" documents (<https://goo.gl/HWWUiv>)
- 1 set of Character Sheets (<https://goo.gl/aKtaCx>)
- 3 Yawning Falls maps on 8.5 x 14 paper (<https://goo.gl/3VtpPn>)
- 4 folders or large envelopes to help organize packets

Within each group, determine who will play the roles of:

- Amelia Fox & Marie James (teachers)
- Father White and Pastor Thompson (religious leaders)
- Derrick McCarthy & Emmon Ricker (business owners)

Split the components of the Items Needed list into four packets:

1. Teachers packet
 - Yawning Falls map
 - Pink, Yellow, and Purple markers
 - Student records from "Primary Source" documents
 - Amelia Fox & Marie James character sheet
2. Religious Leaders packet
 - Yawning Falls map
 - Blue and Red markers
 - Church Member records from "Primary Source" documents
 - Father White & Pastor Thompson character sheet
 - 4 paper clips
 - Transparency
3. Business Owners packet
 - Yawning Falls map
 - Orange, Green, Black, and Brown markers
 - Employee records from "Primary Source" documents
 - Derrick McCarthy & Emmon Ricker character sheet
 - 4 paper clips
 - Transparency
4. Final packet
 - Questions sheet (<https://goo.gl/7mWePg>)
 - Doctor's Records from "Primary Source" documents
 - Census Records from "Primary Source" documents
 - Ladies Temperance League Records from "Primary Source" documents

Activity Directions:

- After creating groups and handing out the packets, read “The Epidemic of Yawning Falls” introduction found on the character sheets along with the students. It may be helpful to list on a whiteboard important clues contained in the introduction (who became ill first, for example).
- Each subgroup (teachers, religious leaders, and business owners) will transfer the information found in their “Primary Source” documents onto their maps in a different way:
 - **Teachers:** Using your school records and the provided map, determine which households suffered from the Epidemic in April, May, and June. If a student was absent for five or more days in **April**, color their house **Purple**. If a student was absent for five or more days in **May**, color their house **Yellow**. If a student was absent for five or more days in **June**, color their house **Pink**. Markers are provided in your envelope. When finished, use the map you’ve made together with the maps made by the town religious leaders and business owners to answer the questions on the question sheet.
 - **Religious Leaders:** Attach the transparency to the provided map by using the paper clips in the envelope. Then color (on the transparency) the houses of each congregation member. Color the houses of the **Catholic** parishioners **blue**. Color the houses of the **Baptists and Presbyterians** parishioners **red**. Then carefully remove the transparency from your map and place it on top of the map and transparency made by the town business owners. Examine the result and then attach both transparencies to the front of the map made by the town schoolteachers. Use the maps to answer the questions on the question sheet.
 - **Business Owners:** Compare the number of illness at each of the four production businesses in Yawning Falls. Attach the blank transparency to the front of the provided map using the four paper clips in the envelope. Then, using your employee records, find the homes of all the workers who fell ill during the spring. If they worked at the **Copper Mine**, draw an **orange** circle around their house (on the transparency). If they worked at **Ricker’s Quarry**, draw a **black** circle around their house. If they worked at **Cantwell’s Sawmill**, draw a **green** circle around their house. If they worked at the **McCarthy’s Gristmill**, draw a **brown** circle around their house. When finished, attach the transparency made by the town religious leaders on top of your transparency and map. Examine the result and then attach both transparencies to the front of the map made by the town schoolteachers. Use the maps to answer the questions on the question sheet.
- When the map is assembled with the two transparencies clipped on top (the colors should mix to create new colors – for example, a Catholic family that had ill children in May will become green), the group will work together to determine how the epidemic spread and accurately fill out the Questions sheet. They may also refer to the Census records, Patient records, and Ladies Temperance League records. It is important to keep relatives in mind – a person with the last name “George” will likely spend time at households with the same last name, for example. Groups should also highlight and consider important clues found in the character sheets.

Answers

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.