

Report on recent outbreak of small-pox / George Newman.

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REPORT ON RECENT OUTBREAK OF SMALL-POX.

[The Chairman of the Public Health Committee has deemed it desirable that the following Report of the Medical Officer to the Public Health Committee should be placed in the hands of Members of the Council at once, instead of waiting until the third week in October.]

To the Public Health Committee of the Finsbury Borough Council.

GENTLEMEN,

I have to report eleven additional cases of Small-pox since September 27th, up to which date there had been four. The total at the present date is, therefore, fifteen.

Ten out of the eleven new cases are attributable to infection derived from some hop-pickers' huts on the farm of Mr. Edward Piper, at Northlands, Bodiam, Sussex. It would appear that the infection was introduced upon this farm in the following manner:—

On September 1st a considerable number of persons (say 50 or 60) travelled from London to the farm in question for the purpose of hop-picking. The hop-pickers were accommodated in twelve "Hop-pickers Huts." These premises appear to have consisted of six small wooden huts, tarred on the outside, and covered with corrugated iron, back to back with six other similar huts. The floors were of earth. There was a door to each hut, but there were no windows. In summer weather it is alleged by the Hop-pickers that these huts are comfortable and adequate to their requirements. The capacity of each hut was about 600-700 cubic feet. At the centre of the combined structure there were two covered "open" huts provided with fireplaces in which the necessary cooking for each family was done.

These twelve huts accommodated, for four weeks, upwards of 60 persons, including children, and in one or two of the huts there were various visitors who stopped from one to four days each. It appears that the total number of persons who lived in these premises for a longer or shorter period during the month of September was 77.

Amongst those who went down at the beginning of the month was a girl, E. S., aged 14, who arrived from Finsbury in company with Mrs. O and family on September 1st. On or about September 10th she appears to have been out of health and suffering from headache. On September 13th, a rash appeared in the form of "spots" on her face. She then felt better, but was sent back to London on Sunday, September 15th, on account of some trifling misbehaviour. On September 15th and 17th, she was seen by a medical man in London, who, she says, stated that she was suffering from "chicken-pox." She lived in Thomas Street, and on September 18th I received the notification of Mrs. C, aged 25 (living in the same house) as suffering from Small-pox. I have formed the opinion that Mrs. C contracted her Small-pox on or about the last day of August, and if, as has been suggested to me, E. S. was suffering from mild Small-pox and not Chicken-pox, it would appear that she also contracted her complaint on or about the last day of August. The ordinary incubation period of Small-pox is 12-14 days, after which follow three or four days of premonitory symptoms—headache, back-ache, fever, and sometimes vomiting—which in their turn are immediately followed by the characteristic rash. From careful enquiry I should, therefore, expect that both these individuals came in the way of Small-pox infection about the end of August, Mrs. C. severely so, and E. S. less severely so.

In any case, there is evidence to show that E. S. left behind in the hop-pickers' huts some kind of infection which had not existed on the farm before, and which it seems impossible to trace to any other source. For on Monday, September 23rd, Mrs. P. reported to the manager of the farm that one of her children was ill, and on the following day her baby (16 months) was similarly ill. The nearest medical man was consulted, and he formed the opinion that the complaint was "chicken-pox."* A day or two later

* It should be stated that small-pox occurring in persons who have been vaccinated is often of a very different and less severe character to small-pox occurring in unvaccinated persons. Errors of diagnosis in such cases may not be due to either carelessness or lack of knowledge. Yet small-pox is liable to be spread by infection not only from well marked and easily recognised cases, but also, as indeed frequently happens, from cases of which the nature is not at first evident. The secondary cases, though derived from mild primary cases, may prove to be very severe.

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the baby became much worse and there appeared "a rash under its skin." A small boy (aged seven) was also taken seriously ill, and Mrs. P decided to return at once to London with the sick children. This she did on Friday evening, September 27th. Being convinced that the illness was of a serious nature, she took the children direct to the Royal Free Hospital in Grays Inn Road, where they were found to be suffering from small-pox. They were removed at midnight to the Small-pox Ships. Mrs. P. and her sister, M. H., then returned to their home in Vineyard Walk. On Saturday, September 28th, M. H. was taken ill and notified to me as suffering from small-pox. I received the three notifications of the two children and of M. H., aged 19, at noon, on Saturday, and at once visited the house to make some preliminary investigations.

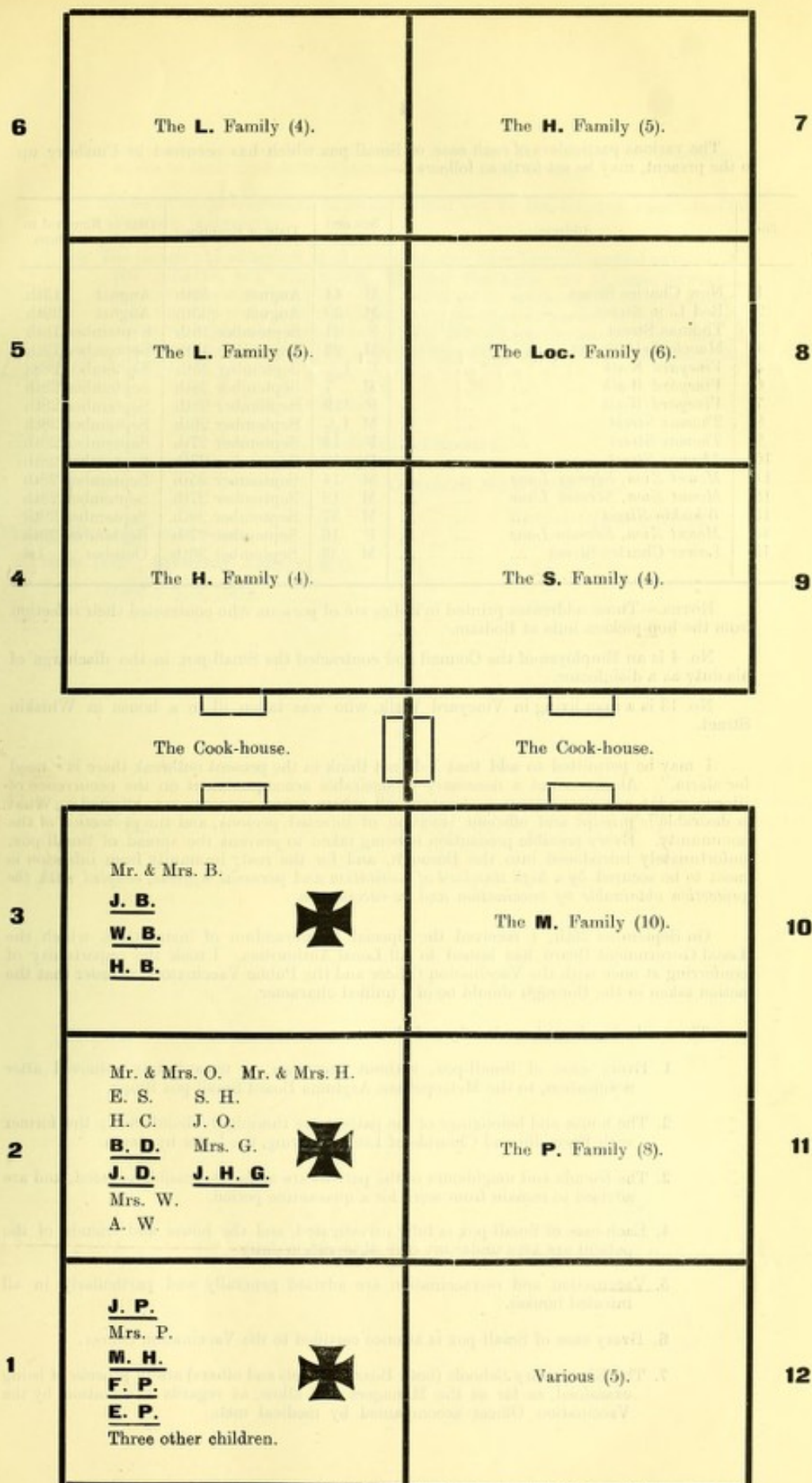
There I learned incidentally that Mrs. P. had arrived the previous night from a farm in the Bodiam district, that there were several children at the same farm suffering from a similar complaint to her own children, that all the hop-pickers in that district were returning to London that night, and that the particular families infected would probably arrive at nine o'clock at Cannon Street Station. It seemed to me imperative that by some means or other these persons should be waylaid and not allowed to enter London and create fresh centres of infection. I, therefore, at once communicated with the Chairman of the Public Health Committee (Dr. Evan Jones) and the Medical Officer of the Administrative County of London (Mr. Shirley F. Murphy). After consultation it was decided to approach the South-Eastern Railway Company, who afforded us facilities for examining all the hop-pickers arriving during the afternoon and evening at Charing Cross, Waterloo, Cannon Street, London Bridge, and New Cross Railway Stations. As rapidly as possible arrangements were made for this medical inspection. Mr. Murphy, Dr. Hamer, Dr. Spon, and Dr. Gabb kindly assisted Dr. Evan Jones and myself in this medical inspection, and we were all assisted by Chief Inspector Green, Inspectors Davis and Longden, and Mr. Jackson, the Clerk, of the Public Health Department. Most of the hop-pickers it appears changed trains at New Cross, and at that station we examined many hundreds of persons. It was, however, at Cannon Street Station, at a late hour, that Dr. Evan Jones was successful in way-laying five cases of small-pox, all belonging to Finsbury (Jessie D, 18 years; Bertha D, 14; James B, 15; William B, 13; and John H. G, 15 months). These patients were removed direct by the Metropolitan Asylums Board to the small-pox ships, and in that way were not brought into Finsbury at all.

On Sunday, September 29th, Chief Inspector Green paid a visit to Bodiam and made various inquiries on my behalf. On that date, also, inspection and re-vaccination was made of nearly all the persons belonging to this Borough who had returned from the Bodiam farm. Two further cases of small-pox appeared on that day: (1) James P, aged 37 years, the father of the two children E P and F P notified on Saturday. J P went to the infected hop-yard on September 14th and returned to London September 18th. (2) Hetty B, aged 16 years, is the sister of J B and W B, who were waylaid at Cannon Street Station. She had been to the farm for a week between September 15th and 22nd, and commenced to show signs of small-pox on September 27th.

It will be seen from the attached diagram that the ten cases which have appeared up to the present occurred in persons living in huts Nos. 1, 2 and 3. It remains to be seen whether any "contact" cases of small-pox will arise. But it seems almost inconceivable to expect, even after the strict measures and precautions adopted, that all the 67 remaining persons who lived in these twelve huts can wholly escape the disease.

It should be added that during the last week of the month—when there was most sickness in the huts—some 40 or 50 other hop-pickers, mostly country people, appear to have been sent to pick hops in the hop-yard in question. It was, of course, not known that the sickness then existent was that of small-pox. Further, it appears that there were some two or three dozen other persons, "gipsies" and the like, working in the same hop-yard but not living in the huts. Those who know of the intimacies and associations of hop-picking will understand the facilities thus afforded for the spread of infectious diseases. I suppose not less than 140 persons in all in that hop-yard ran such risks. This estimate does not, of course, include the infected railway trains or houses in Finsbury and other Boroughs to which these persons returned.

I have also to report the occurrence, on October 1st, of a case of small-pox in Lower Charles Street, a man, aged 33. This case appears to have no connection whatever with the hop-pickers.



NOTE.—The cross denotes the huts infected with small-pox, and the initials in heavy type are those of the small-pox patients.

The various particulars of each case of Small-pox which has occurred in Finsbury up to the present, may be set forth as follows:—

No.	Address.	Sex and Age.	Date of Eruption.	Date of Removal to Small-pox Ships.
1	New Charles Street	M 44	August 12th	August 13th
2	Red Lion Street	M 39	August 25th	August 29th
3	Thomas Street	F 21	September 18th	September 18th
4	Macclesfield Street	M 23	September 18th	September 19th
5	Vineyard Walk	F 1 $\frac{1}{2}$	September 25th	September 28th
6	Vineyard Walk	M 7	September 28th	September 28th
7	Vineyard Walk	F 19	September 28th	September 28th
8	Thomas Street	M 1 $\frac{1}{2}$	September 26th	September 28th
9	Thomas Street	F 14	September 27th	September 28th
10	Thomas Street	F 18	September 27th	September 28th
11	Mount Zion, Sermon Lane	M 14	September 25th	September 28th
12	Mount Zion, Sermon Lane	M 12	September 27th	September 28th
13	Whiskin Street	M 37	September 28th	September 29th
14	Mount Zion, Sermon Lane	F 16	September 27th	September 29th
15	Lower Charles Street	M 33	September 30th	October 1st

NOTES.—Those addresses printed in italics are of persons who contracted their infection from the hop-pickers huts at Bodiam.

No. 4 is an Employee of the Council and contracted the Small-pox in the discharge of his duty as a disinfecter.

No. 13 is a man living in Vineyard Walk, who was taken ill in a house in Whiskin Street.

I may be permitted to add that I do not think in the present outbreak there is "need for alarm." Alarm is not a necessary or desirable accompaniment on the occurrence of illness under any circumstances, least of all where many persons are affected. What is desirable is prompt and efficient isolation of infected persons, and the protection of the community. Every possible precaution is being taken to prevent the spread of Small-pox, unfortunately introduced into the Borough, and for the rest, immunity from infection is most to be secured by a high standard of sanitation and personal hygiene, coupled with the protection obtainable by vaccination and re-vaccination.

On September 26th, I received the Special Memorandum of instructions which the Local Government Board has issued to all Local Authorities. I took the opportunity of conferring at once with the Vaccination Officer and the Public Vaccinators, in order that the action taken in the Borough should be of a unified character.

The methods adopted are briefly as follows:—

1. Every case of Small-pox, without exception, is immediately removed after notification, to the Metropolitan Asylums Board Small-pox Ships.
2. The house and belongings of the patient are thoroughly disinfected; the former with Formalin and Chloride of Lime spraying, the latter by steam.
3. The friends and neighbours of the patient are as far as possible isolated, and are advised to remain from work for a quarantine period.
4. Each case of Small-pox is fully investigated, and the house and friends of the patient are kept under my own observation daily.
5. Vaccination and re-vaccination are advised generally and particularly in all infected houses.
6. Every case of Small-pox is at once certified to the Vaccination Officer.
7. The Elementary Schools (both Board Schools and others) are in process of being examined, as far as the Managers will allow, as regards vaccination by the Vaccination Officer accompanied by medical men.

8. I understand that the Holborn Board of Guardians are making various arrangements to facilitate free vaccination throughout the Borough.
9. House to house inspection is being carried out in the infected streets by the Sanitary Inspectors.
10. The names and addresses of any persons who have been in contact with small-pox patients, and who belong to other Boroughs, are at once forwarded to their respective localities. The addresses of seventeen families in contact with the hop-pickers from Bodiam were at once forwarded in this way, and are being kept under observation. We have thus accounted for every case of small-pox at Bodiam, and for every person who returned to London from the infected hop-yard.

I am, Gentlemen.

Your obedient Servant,

GEORGE NEWMAN, M.D.,

Medical Officer of Health.

PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT,

TOWN HALL, ROSEBERY AVENUE, E.C.

October 2nd, 1901.

8. I understand that the Hibernia Board of Directors are making various attempts to locate the late Mrs. Hibernia in the County.

9. Hibernia is now located in the County of Hibernia, and is now located in the County of Hibernia.

10. The names and addresses of the persons who have been in contact with Hibernia are as follows: Hibernia, who is now located in the County of Hibernia, and is now located in the County of Hibernia. The names and addresses of the persons who have been in contact with Hibernia are as follows: Hibernia, who is now located in the County of Hibernia, and is now located in the County of Hibernia.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

GEORGE HEWMAN, M.D.

Medical Officer of Hibernia.

Public Health Department,

Town Hall, Hibernia, N.O.

October 2nd, 1901.

