



“Typhoid Mary” Suggested Reading

Compiled by Leslie Goddard, Ph.D.

Leavitt, Judith Walzer. *Typhoid Mary: Captive to the Public's Health*. 1997. The definitive work on Mary Mallon, written by a university professor. Exhaustively researched but very readable. Puts Mallon's story nicely in the context of other debates surrounding modern diseases (AIDS, drug-resistant tuberculosis) and the intersection of disease control and individual liberties.

Bartoletti, Susan Campbell. *Terrible Typhoid Mary: A True Story of the Deadliest Cook in America*. 2015. Engaging, energetic telling of the story of Mary Mallon. Geared for age 12 and up, recommended for adults as well as young adults. Skillfully researched, well-illustrated and fast-moving.

Jarrow, Gail. *Fatal Fever: Tracking Down Typhoid Mary*. 2015. Engrossing version of the Mary Mallon story for middle-school readers and up. Lots of great photos, prints and documents.

Bourdain, Anthony. *Typhoid Mary An Urban Historical*. 2010. The renowned chef gives an entertaining version of Mallon's story, putting her story in the context of the particular challenges and professional quirks of the cooking profession. Not necessarily the best first book on Mallon but essential for understanding her history.



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Mary Mallon, circa 1909

“Typhoid Mary” Timeline

Sept. 23, 1869 – Mary Mallon born, County Tyrone, Ireland

1880 – The bacillus that is suspected of causing typhoid fever is first described

1883 (maybe 1884) – Mallon immigrates to the United States

1900-1907 – Nearly two dozen people fall ill with typhoid in houses where Mallon worked

Aug. 4, 1906 – Mallon begins work as a cook at a home in Oyster Bay, NY. By early September, six people in the household of 11 fall sick with typhoid fever

Autumn 1906 -- Home owners hire New York City Department of Health sanitary engineer George Soper to investigate the cause of the outbreak. Soper tracks the source of infection to Mallon

1907 – Mallon forcibly removed from her home and sent into quarantine on North Brother Island. She is the first American asymptomatic carrier of the bacteria that causes typhoid fever to be identified and traced

1909 – Mallon sues for release from captivity. New York Supreme Court denies her request

1910 – Health department releases Mallon on condition she never work as a cook again

1914 – Typhoid vaccination moves into use for the general public

1915 – Mallon found working as a cook, under an alias, at the Sloane Hospital for Women in New York City in the midst of a typhoid outbreak. She is sent back into isolation at North Brother Island, where she will live for the remainder of her life

1932 – Mallon suffers a paralytic stroke

Nov. 11, 1938 – Mary Mallon dies. She was officially blamed for 10 outbreaks totaling 51 cases of typhoid fever, and three deaths from the disease