

JACOB, SARAH (1857 - 1869), the fasting girl

Name: Sarah Jacob
Date of birth: 1857
Date of death: 1869
Parent: Hannah Jacob (née Williams)
Parent: Evan Jacob
Gender: Female
Occupation: fasting girl
Area of activity: Medicine
Author: David Jenkins

Born 12 May 1857, third daughter of Evan and Hannah Jacob, Llether-neuadd-uchaf, Llanfihangel Iorath, Carmarthenshire. In February 1867, during an illness, she became unconscious and did not recover for a whole month, whereupon she refused all but a little milk food. By 10 October 1867 it was stated that she had ceased to eat and drink, and it was claimed that she lived thus until 17 December 1869, a total of 113 weeks - when she died. News of her fasting spread far and wide, and soon became a topic of discussion among eminent doctors, while visitors came to Llether-neuadd-uchaf from all parts of England and Wales, and usually presented her with gifts of flowers, books, and money. After much controversy in the press (including *The Lancet*) a staff of trained nursing-sisters from Guy's Hospital, London, was set to watch the case. A little over a week after their arrival the girl died. Her parents were accused of causing her death by not feeding her, and after trial both were sentenced to terms of imprisonment.

Author

Dr David Jenkins, (1912 - 2002)

Sources

W. M. Wilkinson, *The cases of the Welsh fasting girl and her father* (London 1870)

Robert Fowler, M.D., *A Complete History of the Case of the Welsh Fasting-Girl (Sara Jacob) with Comments thereon and Observations on Death from Starvation* (London 1871)

D. Jones, *The Welsh Fasting Girl being a complete history of the remarkable case of Sarah Jacob, as revealed by authentic sources of information of absorbing general, medical and legal interest* (Pencader 1904)

Further Reading

NLW Archives: [NLW MS 23137E: Sarah Jacob, the 'Welsh fasting girl'](#)

D. G. Lloyd Hughes, Hanes hynod Sarah Jacob, y ferch a lwgwyd i farwolaeth, *Y Casglwr pob peth printiedig*, Rhif 51, Gaeaf 1993

Richard W. Ireland, Sanctity, superstition and the death of Sarah Jacob, in *Making legal history* (Cambridge 2012), pp.284-302

[The Sarah Jacob Case, 1869](#), Welsh Legal History Society

Wikipedia Article: [Sarah Jacob](#)

Additional Links

NLW Archives: [D. Roy Evans Collection A/10: A vol. of newspaper cuttings \(12 Dec. 1869-18 Jan. 1870\) relating to the death of, and the inquest upon, Sarah Jacobs](#)

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