

Appendix C – Epidemics

The following is a list of known epidemics. The items in red font were added from the Indian narratives, when no listing was previously included^[i]. Of course, all of these epidemics affected the Native tribes in the area as well as the European settlers.

- 1520-1524: Smallpox (Thornton, 1987, p. 64)^{ii[iii]} spread to eastern and western Indians from Mexico
- 1528: Cholera on the Texas Coast following de Vaca's arrival
- 1545 – 1548: Bubonic Plague Southwest Pueblo Indians following Coronado's visit
- 1566 – 1567: Catawba decline from disease, warfare and alcohol
- 1585: Secotan begin to die of diseases of military colonists (Harriott, 1588)^{iii[iii]}
- 1586: A second Secotan epidemic, possibly Typhus (Thornton, 1987, p 67), which spread from Florida to New England
- 1592 - 1596: measles – Seneca Indians
- 1612-1619: Bubonic Plague – north east coastal Indians
- 1614 – 1617: Illness upon Capt. Hunts ship killed up to 75% of the native Maritime population in waves over 4 years (Dobyns, 1983; p 15-23)^{iv[iv]}
- 1616 -1620: Boston Bay, possibly Bubonic Plague, yellow fever or smallpox “swept the islands clear of inhabitants” and killed 9/10th of the Indians along the coast. (Thornton, 1987, p. 71)
- 1617 – 1619: smallpox – Massachusetts Bay area
- 1617: Great New England pestilence reduced Massachuset tribe greatly
- 1630: Smallpox – Hurons of Ontario
- 1633: Naranganset (RI) lost 700 to smallpox epidemic
- 1634: Smallpox – Indians living along the Connecticut River
- 1634 -1640: Repeated smallpox epidemics among the Huron (Michigan and Canada)
- 1633: Smallpox – Plymouth Colony
- 1650s: Mid 1600s – NJ, PA and northern tribes lost 90% of their population to smallpox (Thornton, 1987, p. 70)
- 1657: Measles – Boston, Massachusetts
- 1667: Smallpox – North Hampton, Virginia, spreading throughout the tidewater area.
- 1675: Smallpox in the Western Texas tribes
- 1687: Measles – Boston, Massachusetts
- 1690: Yellow fever – New York, New York
- 1691: Smallpox in the Indian Nations on the Illinois River
- 1696: Smallpox – Albemarle area, NC
- 1698 – 1699: Smallpox on the Arkansas and Mississippi Rivers
- 1699: Smallpox – South Carolina (Duffy, 1951, p 332)^{v[v]}
- 1700: Sewee Indians wasted by smallpox before 1700
- 1708: Raging of a violent distemper among the Tuscarora Indians, NC
- 1710: Nauset Indians in Massachusetts died of fever in great numbers

- 1711 - 1712: Smallpox in the Carolinas
- 1713: Measles – Boston, Massachusetts
- 1713 – 1715: Measles – Indians of New England and the Great Lakes
- 1717: Smallpox among the Iroquois
- 1721 – 1722: Smallpox – Boston, Massachusetts
- 1729: Measles – Boston, Massachusetts
- 1731 – 1733: Smallpox among the Indians in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York and Canada among the 6 Nations and New England Indians (Thornton, 1987, p. 78)
- 1733: Narraganset tribe in Rhode Island smallpox epidemic, lost 700
- 1738: Smallpox – South Carolina
- 1738: Smallpox killed 50% of the Cherokee, other tribes suffering equally
- 1739 - 1740: Measles – Boston, Massachusetts
- 1747: Measles – Connecticut, New York, Pennsylvania, South Carolina
- 1755 – 1756: Smallpox – North America
- 1759: Measles – North America
- 1759: Smallpox in the Carolinas, destroyed over half of the Catawba, Cheraw and Wateree
- 1760: Smallpox – Cherokee, Catawba
- 1761: Influenza – North America and West Indies
- 1763: Wampanoag tribe in Massachusetts – severe epidemic
- 1763: Smallpox among the tribes along the Ohio River, intentionally introduced^{vi[vi]}
- 1763 – 1764: Tuberculosis on Nantucket Island (Thornton, 1987, p. 82)^{vii[vii]}
- 1764: 2/3 of Wampanoag destroyed by fever
- 1770s: Smallpox – Northwest Coast Indians
- 1770 (circa): Sewee in SC wasted by smallpox
- 1772: Measles – North America
- 1775: Unknown cause – North America, particularly in the northeast (also Utina in Florida)
- 1780 – 1782: Smallpox – Plains Indians
- 1783: Bilioid disorder – Dover, Delaware
- 1783: Smallpox among the Cherokee
- 1788: Measles – Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and New York
- 1788: Smallpox – Pueblo Indians
- 1793: Influenza and "putrid fever" – Vermont
- 1793: Influenza – Virginia
- 1793: Yellow fever – Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1793)
- 1793: Unknown – Harrisburg, Pennsylvania
- 1793: Unknown – Middletown, Pennsylvania
- 1794: Yellow fever – Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- 1796 – 1797: Yellow fever – Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- 1795: Pamlico tribe in NC almost destroyed by smallpox
- 1798: Yellow fever – Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- 1803: Yellow fever – New York

- 1820 – 1823: Fever – United States spreading from the Schuylkill River
- 1831 – 1832: Asiatic cholera – United States (brought by English immigrants)
- 1831 – 1834: Smallpox – Plains Indians
- 1832: Cholera – New York City and other major cities
- 1833: Cholera – Columbus, Ohio
- 1834: Cholera – New York City
- 1837: Typhus – Philadelphia
- 1837 – 1838: Smallpox – Great Plains (1837-38 smallpox epidemic) (Mandan decimated in Missouri)
- 1841: Yellow fever – United States (especially severe in the South)
- 1847: Yellow fever New Orleans
- 1848 – 1849: Cholera – North America
- 1849: Cholera New York
- 1850: Yellow fever – United States
- 1850 – 1851: Influenza – North America
- 1851: Cholera Coles County, Illinois, The Great Plains, and Missouri
- 1852: Yellow fever – United States (New Orleans-8,000 die in summer)
- 1855: Yellow fever – United States
- 1860 – 1861: smallpox – Pennsylvania
- 1862: Smallpox - Pacific Northwest, particularly the British Columbia Coast and Interior
- 1865 – 1873: Smallpox – Philadelphia, New York City, Boston, New Orleans
- 1865 – 1873: Cholera – Baltimore, Maryland, Memphis, Washington, DC
- 1865 – 1873: Recurring epidemics of typhus, typhoid, scarlet fever, and yellow fever

References

Dobyns HF (1983) *Their Number Become Thinned: Native American Population Dynamics in Eastern North America* (Native American historic demography series). University of Tennessee Press, Knoxville.

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Stearn EW, Stearn AE (1943) Smallpox Immunization of the Amerindian. *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 131:601-613.

Thornton, R (1987) *American Indian Holocaust and Survival: A Population History Since 1492*. Civilization of American Indian Series, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, OK.

Endnotes

^{i[i]} http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_epidemics

^{ii[iii]} There are a total of 2 smallpox epidemics and 9 epidemics of other diseases recorded during the 16th century in North America. (Thornton, 1987, p. 64)

^{iii[iii]} “the people began to die very fast and many in short space; in some townes about 20, in some 40, in some 60 and in one 6 score which in truth was very many in respect to their numbers...The disease also so strange that they neither knew what it was nor how to cure it; the like by report of the oldest men in the countrey never happened before, time out of minde.” (Harriott, 1588:F)

^{iv[iv]} Dobyns (1983; P 15-23) notes twelve 17th century North American Native American epidemics including smallpox, measles, influenza, diphtheria typhus, bubonic plague and scarlet fever.

^{v[v]} Smallpox “swept away a whole...nation, all to 5 or 6 which ran away and left their dead unburied, lying on the ground for the vultures to devour.” (Duffy, 1951, p 332)

^{vi[vi]} Thornton (1987, p. 78-79) indicates that it is about this time that intentional exposure of Indians to small pox begins to occur. In 1763 in Pennsylvania, we find a written report by Sir Jeffery Amherst, commander-in-chief of the British forces...wrote in the postscript of a letter to Bouquet the suggestion that smallpox be sent among the disaffected tribe. Bouquet replied, also in a postscript, “I will try to inoculate the[m]...with some blankets that may fall into their hands and take care not to get the disease myself”. To Bouquet’s postscript, Amherst replied, “You will do well to try to inoculate the Indians by means of blankets as well as to try every other method that can serve to extirpate this exorable race”. On June 24, Capt Ecuyer of the Royal Americans, noted in his journal: “Out of our regard for them, (i.e. two Indian chiefs) we gave them two blankets and a handkerchief out of the smallpox hospital. I hope it will have the desired effect.” (Stearn and Stearn, 1945, p. 44-45). Shortly thereafter smallpox spread among the tribes along the Ohio River causing many deaths, for example, among the Mingo, the Delaware and the Shawnee.

^{vii[vii]} While tuberculosis isn’t typically thought of as an epidemic, this strain was especially virulent, killing 222 of 256 Indians infected in a total population of only 358. (Thornton, 1987, p. 82)