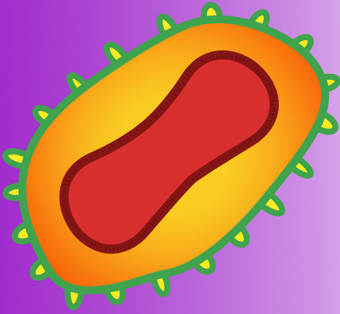


WHAT KILLED THE ABENAKI?

Before European explorers came to New England, there were MILLIONS of indigenous people living in North America. The Abenaki in New Hampshire were one of those peoples. However, soon after the Europeans made contact, many indigenous people began to die from diseases the explorers and colonists brought from Europe. The indigenous people had no immunity to these diseases since they had never been exposed to them before. About 75-90% of indigenous people died from disease. We don't know what all the diseases that killed the Abenaki were. Lots were just called "plague." But these are some of the diseases brought over by Europeans that we know were especially deadly for the Abenaki in New Hampshire.



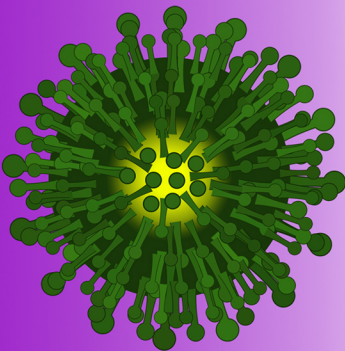
SMALLPOX

Smallpox was a virus that caused a rash, fever, and blisters. It was both very deadly and very contagious. Smallpox first infected humans who worked with farm animals. Since the Abenaki never raised farm animals, they had never had smallpox before. Smallpox killed the most indigenous people of any disease in the 1600s. In the 1700s, people started to invent vaccines to protect against smallpox. The world was declared free from smallpox by 1980.



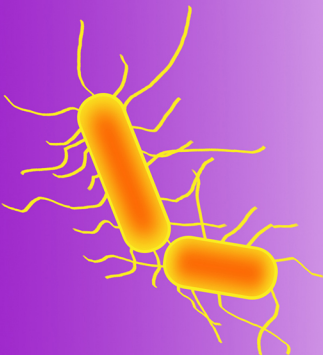
MEASLES

Measles is a virus that causes a rash, fever, sore throat, and cough. It is extremely contagious. Almost 90% of people who were exposed to measles got the disease! Measles is especially dangerous for children, and many children who got the measles died. Some adults died too. If they survived, many went blind or were very sick for the rest of their lives. Measles still exists but now people can get vaccinated against the disease and it doesn't infect as many people.



INFLUENZA

You've probably heard of influenza — we also call it "the flu." A flu virus infects the lungs and throat, which causes a sore throat, cough, runny nose, and can make it very hard to breathe. Indigenous people had never had these types of infections before the Europeans brought them. People did not know that coughing would spread the disease, so it was very contagious in Abenaki villages. People still get the flu now but there are vaccines that can protect people from some types of the virus each year.



TYPHUS

Typhus is a disease caused by a bacteria. It causes headaches, fever, and rashes, and can kill people. Typhus mostly infected people in crowded and dirty places, because it spreads to people from bugs like lice and fleas. Lice and fleas came to North America on rats on the ships Europeans used. The rats escaped onto land and the infected bugs lived on cloth that the colonists traded with the Abenaki. Typhus still exists but mostly in places that don't have effective ways to keep things clean.