

Credits:

Clip from "Nazi Concentration Camps," a documentary created for the Nuremberg war-crimes trial and introduced as evidence on November 29, 1945.

Clip online, courtesy U.S. National Archives.

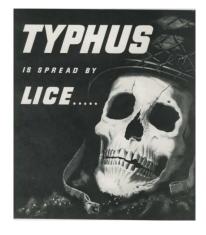
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Media Stream



Typhus is Spread by Lice

Irish people attempting to find better lives elsewhere—during and after the years when potato blight was ruining their crops—had to endure yet-another adversity.

Sailing ships sometimes became "coffin ships" when hopeful Irish emigrés contracted a serious disease known as "ship fever."

A virulent form of <u>typhus</u> (which is most frequently spread by lice), ship fever claimed the lives of many making the passage, as <u>witnessed</u> (on one vessel) by Patrick Burns: My sister Margaret and myself sailed from Sligo [Ireland] on the 27th May 1847 and after a very troublesome and turbulent voyage landed in Quebec, on the 11th day of July, 1847. The ships name was Ellen and was commanded by Capt. Thomas Hood an Englishman and a very efficient and good man.

Shortly after leaving Sligo with about three hundred and fifty passengers the deadly "ship fever," a violent form of typhus fever, raged among the passengers and fully one third of the passengers died of this dread disease.

The disease was of generally short duration in most cases. Sometimes a person would be alright in the evening and would be taken sick at night and be dead by day break. This WWII-era poster warns that typhus is spread by lice. It is caused by bacteria, not a virus, which is then spread by fleas, lice and chiggers.

Although not the problem it once was, the World Health Organization (WHO) tells us that lice-spreading <u>typhus is still a killer</u>. It can spread, with disastrous consequences, in overcrowded places like refugee camps and prisons.

Image of poster online, courtesy U.S. National Archives (NARA).

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<u>Consumption - Tuberculosis and How It Spreads</u> Clip from "Goodbye Mr. Germ," produced in 1940 by the National Tuberculosis Association, online courtesy Internet Archive.

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