



Disease and Discrimination: Poverty and Pestilence in Colonial Atlantic America

Dale L. Hutchinson

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“Fascinating yet sobering, this volume highlights the important role that social and political causes of poverty and poor living conditions, beyond the presence of infectious pathogens themselves, play in disease epidemics and high mortality.”—Megan A. Perry, editor of *Bioarchaeology and Behavior: The People of the Ancient Near East*

“Hutchinson effectively argues that disease is not an event but a process and then wonderfully illustrates how the interaction of culture and illness shaped the history of the eastern seaboard from the sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries.”—Marie Danforth, University of Southern Mississippi

Disease and discrimination are processes linked to class in the early American colonies. Many early colonists fell victim to mass sickness as Old and New World systems collided and new social, political, economic, and ecological dynamics allowed disease to spread.

Dale Hutchinson argues that most colonists, slaves, servants, and nearby Native Americans suffered significant health risks due to their lower economic and social status. With examples ranging from indentured servitude in the Chesapeake to the housing and sewage systems of New York to the effects of conflict between European powers, Hutchinson posits that poverty and living conditions, more so than microbes, were often at the root of epidemics.

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