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Human Zoo Healthcare at the 1904 World's Fair

Were precautions taken or put into place for the Human Zoo performers at the 1904 World's Fair? This topic has been overlooked and understudied by historians, there are few articles written and we do not know the true death toll which shows the racism towards these indigenous peoples. The research for this project was conducted at the State Historical Society of Missouri, the St. Louis Mercantile Library, Newspapers.com, Archives.com, St. Louis Public Library, and the Missouri Historical Society, including research on primary sources such as official World's Fair committee meeting minutes, hospital records, vaccination records and immigration records, as well as library research in secondary sources. A substantial number of indigenous peoples died at the fair due to improper healthcare for multiple reasons: They were brought to live here without proper vaccinations upon arrival; they were treated as sub-human. They were not prepared for the weather or diseases that they were introduced to, they were not properly clothed, all while on display and gawked at for being "savage". This is a relevant topic as we deal with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, which has disproportionately affected poorer people and people of color, demonstrating the connection between social inequality and poor health. The racism and inequality in the U.S. today emerged out of the racist attitudes evident at the fair over a century ago, so research on the World's Fair helps us understand the legacy of racism today and its impact on public health.