***Lies My teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong*** James W. Loewen

*Pg. 60* “The attempts at resistance gave Columbus an excuse to make war. On March 24, 1495, he set out to conquer the Arawaks. Bartolome de Las Casas described the force Columbus assembled to put down the rebellion. ‘Since the Admiral perceived that daily the people of the land were taking up arms, ridiculous weapons in reality…he hastened to proceed to the country and disperse and subdue, by force of arms, the people the entire island…for this he chose 200 foot soldiers and 20 cavalry, with many crossbows and small cannon, lances, and swords, and a still more terrible weapon against the Indians, in addition to the horses: this was 20 hunting dogs, who were torn loose and immediately tore the Indians apart.” Naturally, the Spanish won. According to Kirkpatrick Sale, who quotes Ferdinand Columbus’s biography of his father: “The soldiers mowed down dozens with point-blank volleys, loosed the dogs to rip open limbs and bellies, chased fleeing Indians into the bush and to skewer them on sword and pike, and ‘with God’s aid soon gained a complex victory, killing many Indians and capturing others who were also killed.’”

*Pg. 65* “A particularly repellent aspect of the slave trade was sexual. As soon as the 1493 expedition got to the Caribbean, before it even reached Haiti, Columbus was rewarding his lieutenants with native women to rape. On Haiti, sex slaves were one more perquisite that the Spaniards enjoyed. Columbus wrote a friend in 1500, ‘a hundred castellanoes are as easily obtained for a woman as for a farm, and it is very general and there are plenty of dealers who go about looking for girls; those from nine and ten are now in demand.’”

*Pg. 70* “Columbus’s conquest of Haiti can be seen as an amazing feat of courage and imagination by the first of many brave empire builders. It can also be understood as a bloody atrocity that left a legacy of genocide and slavery that endures in some degree to this day. Both views of Columbus are valid; indeed, Columbus’s importance in history owes precisely to his being both a heroic navigator *and* a great plunderer. If Columbus were only the former, he would merely rival Leif Erickson. Columbus’s actions exemplify both meanings of the word *exploit*-a remarkable deed and also taking advantage of.”

*Pg. 81* “In 1617, just before the pilgrims landed, the process started in southern New England. For decades, British and French fisherman had fished off the Massachusetts coast. After filling their hulls with cod, they would go ashore to lay in firewood and fresh water and perhaps capture a few Indians to sell into slavery in Europe. It is likely that these fisherman transmitted some illness to the people they met. The plague that ensues made the Black Death pale by comparison. Some historians think the disease was the bubonic plague; others suggest that it was viral hepatitis, smallpox, chicken pox, or influenza.

Within three years the plague wiped out between 90 percent and 96 percent of the inhabitants of coastal New England. The Indian societies lay devastated. Only ‘the twentieth person is scarce left alive,’ wrote Robert Cushman, a British eyewitness, recording a death rate unknown in all previous human experience. Unable to cope with so many corpses, the survivors abandoned their villages and fled, often to a neighboring tribe. Because they carried the infestation with them, Indians died who had never encountered a white person…

…The impact of the epidemics on the two cultures was profound. The English Separatists, already seeing their lives as part of a divinely inspired morality play, found it easy to infer that God was on their side. John Winthrop, governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, called the plague ‘miraculous.’ In 1634 he wrote to a friend in England: ‘But for the natives in these parts, God hath so pursued them, as for 300 miles space the greatest part of them are swept away by the smallpox which still continues among them. So as God hath thereby cleared our title to this place, those who remain in these parts, being in all not 50, have put themselves under our protection…’ God the Original Real Estate Agent!

Many Indians likewise inferred that their god had abandoned them. Robert Cushman reported that ‘those that are left, have their courage much abated, and their countenance is dejected, and they seem as a people affrighted.’ After a smallpox epidemic the Cherokee ‘despaired so much that they lost confidence in their gods and the priests destroyed the sacred objects of the tribe.’ After all, neither Indians nor Pilgrims had access to the germ theory of disease. Indian healers could supply no cure; their medicines and herbs offered no relief. Their religion provided no explanation. That of the whites did. Like the Europeans three centuries before them, many Indians surrendered to alcohol, converted to Christianity, or simply killed themselves.

These epidemics probably constituted the most important geopolitical event of the early seventeenth century. Their net result was that the British, for their first fifty years in New England, would face no real Indian challenge. Indeed, the plague helped prompt legendarily warm reception Plymouth enjoyed from the Wampanoags.