

“Lungers”

“Everyone comes here to die.” That is what residents of Arizona thought about many of the people who moved here in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Why would they think that? Many people who came to Arizona during this time came because they were told that the fresh, dry air, and warm temperatures would help them recover from, or at least ease their symptoms of, tuberculosis.

Tuberculosis, also called TB, is a highly contagious lung disease. One seventh to one fourth of all the people that died in the United States in the early 1900s died from tuberculosis. Inhaling the tuberculosis germ spreads TB. The germ is sent out into the air from an infected person coughing, sneezing, or even talking. At the time, there were no medications for tuberculosis, so most people who had the disease died. People suffered with tuberculosis. They ran high fevers, had severe coughs, and the sweats. However, the worst symptom was lesions in their lungs. Lesions are sores that split or blister and then bleed. So, when people with TB coughed, they would cough up blood. This symptom made it easy for other people to identify those who had tuberculosis. The name, “Lunger” came from this symptom. This was not a nice thing to call them, but many people did not like individuals who had tuberculosis. People were terrified they would get TB. As a matter of fact, there was so much fear that some cities had preventoriums. A preventorium was a place where groups of children who were at risk of catching TB were often sent, even if they did have it at the time.

During the tuberculosis epidemic, cities in Arizona advertised the state as an ideal place for treatment of TB. The population of Arizona began to increase due to all of the tuberculosis patients looking for a place to be treated and cured. There were many sanitariums in the state of Arizona. Sanitariums were the facilities where people were treated for serious and contagious diseases. They had doctors and nurses who used different methods of treating the patients and their diseases. All of the sanitariums stressed clean air, healthy food, and lots of rest. They were modeled after European resorts of the time. The sanitariums had beautiful buildings, courtyards, and individual rooms. Some sanitariums even offered cottages, tennis courts, and special treatments. They were very expensive.

Because TB was so contagious, the sanitariums were usually isolated from the cities. Each sanitarium was equipped to take care of about 120 people. Prescott had a sanitarium called The Pines. There were a few sanitariums in Phoenix. One in Sunnyslope held 100 people. But by far the greatest area for sanitariums was in Tucson. Tucson had over a dozen sanitariums. These sanitariums were like hotels.

By 1920, Tucson had 7,000 people who had come for treatment of tuberculosis. So many people came to the West that there was not enough housing for them all. Tent cities began to pop up in different areas. One of the people who lived in a tent city, Dick Hall, described it like this, “a place of squalor shunned by most citizens.” He described what it was like to live in a dwelling there in 1910, “possessed of a wood floor, steel roof, outside water faucet and a one-hole outhouse thirty-five feet to the rear . . . the nights were heartbreaking, as one walked along the dark streets, he heard coughing from every tent. It was truly a place of lost souls and lingering death. Sometimes life was too hard to bear, and a victim would end it. He was soon replaced, however, by others who hoped for a cure.” Because people were so desperate to be cured and there was a shortage of housing, many slept in the desert.⁽¹⁾

People continued to die from this disease until a medication was developed in the 1940s. Arizona took care of people with TB for over 50 years before the medication was developed. However, the medication was only effective if the disease was diagnosed in its early stages.

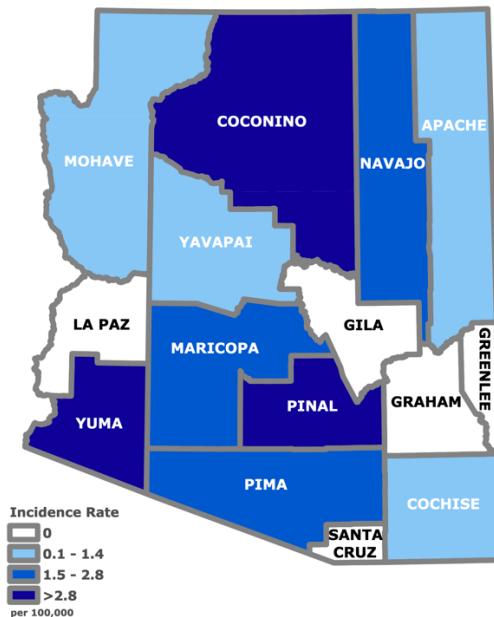
⁽¹⁾ Sanitarium of the Southwest, *Seeking a Cure in The Arizona Sunshine* by W. Lane Rogers, The Catalina Foothills Community, The Desert Leaf, January 1992.

Arizona Tuberculosis Disease

Case Count & Incidence, 2018

<https://azdhs.gov/documents/preparedness/epidemiology-disease-control/disease-integrated-services/tb-control/reports/2018-az-tb-cases-rates-by-county.pdf>

County	Case Count 2018	Population 2018	Incidence per 100,000 people 2018
Apache	1	73,330	1.36
Cochise	1	130,319	.77
Coconino	5	145,564	3.43
Gila	0	54,946	-
Graham	0	38,126	-
Greenlee	0	10,506	-
La Paz	0	21,890	-
Maricopa	95	4,294,460	2.21
Mohave	2	212,948	.94
Navajo	2	112,746	1.77
Pima	19	1,034,201	1.84
Pinal	41	440,591	9.31
Santa Cruz	0	52,390	-
Yavapai	2	228,970	.87
Yuma	10	225,212	4.44
Arizona	178	7,076,199	2.52
U.S.	9,029		2.76



What Do We Know?

We have very little data (mathematical information) about tuberculosis in the 1900s. At the time the federal government did not collect or keep information about why people died, nor did they keep very good records about large-scale diseases. Doctors and sometimes the state typically kept these records. Many cases were not reported to anyone collecting information. So, the data we have, is only of the people who were reported to the government. There may have been many, many more cases that went unreported. Here is a collection of data about TB in the early 1900s.

National Statistics – Deaths from Tuberculosis

(Statistics are conjectures or educated guesses/statements made from examining data)

- In 1920 1/7 to 1/4 of all the people that died in the United States died from tuberculosis.
- In 1900 -1904, tuberculosis was causing roughly 185 deaths per 100,000 a year in the United States.
- By 1944 the death rate was down to 43 per 100,000.
- In 1923, there were 500 deaths per 100,000 in Arizona.

Arizona Population of Tuberculosis Patients in the early 1900s

CITY	YEAR	POPULATION OF LUNGERS	GENERAL POPULATION	% OF LUNGERS IN THE CITY	# OF DEATHS DUE TO TB
Tucson	1920	7,000	20,053	34%	100
Sunnyslope	1930	*100	700	14%	4
Prescott	1913	120	5,010	2%	25
Cave Creek	1920	*30	< 100	30%	.5
Castle Hot Springs	1920	10	< 100	10%	.5
Tempe community	1920	*31	1,962	2%	10
Phoenix	1920	941	29,053	3%	145
Arizona	1920		334,162		1,671
United States	1920		106,021,537		196,140

* Also included in Phoenix data

1. Using the Arizona's Cities and Counties map, make a visual representation that would highlight **where** and **how many** people with tuberculosis were being treated. Remember to change the title of the map to reflect it is now about people suffering from tuberculosis and the map has a legend.
2. Using the visual representation from the question above: Would this visual encourage you to move to one of the locations if you were suffering from tuberculosis? Explain your answer on the back of your visual representation.
3. On the back of your visual representation, explain if tuberculosis is a local, state, national or global problem. Use evidence to support your answer.

Name(s) _____

Scoring Guide for Visual Representation (map)

Requirements	Points Possible	Points Earned
Title of map reflects tuberculosis in AZ.	10	
Colors or symbols on the map easily communicate the data on number of people suffering from tuberculosis.	10	
Legend explains the colors or symbols.	10	
Map is visually attractive.	10	
Explanation of would you move to one of these locations is adequate and thoughtful.	10	
Explanation of the scale of the problem of tuberculosis is adequate, thoughtful, and supported by evidence.	20	
Total	70	

Name(s) _____

Scoring Guide for Visual Representation (map)

Requirements	Points Possible	Points Earned
Title of map reflects tuberculosis in AZ.	10	
Colors or symbols on the map easily communicate the data on number of people suffering from tuberculosis.	10	
Legend explains the colors or symbols.	10	
Map is visually attractive.	10	
Explanation of would you move to one of these locations is adequate and thoughtful.	10	
Explanation of the scale of the problem of tuberculosis is adequate, thoughtful, and supported by evidence.	20	
Total	70	