

NLM Traveling Exhibitions

PR Information



www.nlm.nih.gov/politicsofyellowfever

The National Library of Medicine produced *Politics of Yellow Fever in Alexander Hamilton's America*, guest curated by public historian Ashley Bowen, PhD (editor of *Perspectives on History*).

The traveling exhibition and companion website explore how party politics shaped the response to the 1793 yellow fever epidemic in Philadelphia. While citizens confronted yellow fever in the absence of an effective cure or consensus about the origins of the disease, medical professionals, early political parties, and some individuals advanced their respective agendas. As a result, Philadelphia's sick and dying received medical care informed as much by politics as by the best available science.

Politics of Yellow Fever includes an [education component](#) with a K-12 lesson plan and a university module, and a [digital gallery](#) that features a curated selection of fully digitized items from the historical collections of the NLM, which are also available in their entirety in [NLM Digital Collections](#).

Please include this courtesy line with all public announcements about the project:

The National Library of Medicine produced this exhibition and companion website.

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Host venues for *Politics of Yellow Fever* receive the following PR images. For your reference, there are brief captions for the images. Please include their corresponding **courtesy** noted below when using them.



Yellow fever is a viral infection that damages the liver. The resulting jaundice or yellowing of the skin is how the disease gets its name.

Four illustrations show the progression of yellow fever in *Observations sur la fièvre jaune, faites à Cadix, en 1819*, Etienne Pariset and André Mazet, Paris, 1820

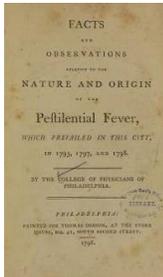
Courtesy National Library of Medicine



Secretary of the Treasury and leading Federalist Alexander Hamilton contracted yellow fever but survived. Although he was not a doctor, Hamilton waded into heated public and medical debates about the possible cause and potential cures for the disease.

Engraved portrait of Alexander Hamilton, undated

Courtesy Bureau of Engraving and Printing



The College of Physicians, one of the oldest medical associations, believed that yellow fever was an imported disease, brought to the city through trade. The association's stance aligned with the Federalists' point of view.

Facts and Observations Relative to the Nature and Origin of the Pestilential Fever, College of Physicians of Philadelphia, 1798

Courtesy National Library of Medicine



Dr. Benjamin Rush, a prominent Philadelphia physician and signer of the Declaration of Independence, split from many of his medical peers over the suspected origins of and best treatment for yellow fever. Rush believed that a miasm or impure air brought the disease to the city.

An Account of the Bilious Remitting Yellow Fever, as It Appeared in the City of Philadelphia, in the Year 1793, Benjamin Rush, Philadelphia, 1794

Courtesy National Library of Medicine