Smallpox to the loss of almost all our bison, which one was more devastating? Smallpox spread all across America. It spread to the black feet and all the way to the Pacific Ocean, the Columbia River and the rocky mountains killing thousands of strong native Americans. The great plains now land of the dead. bison, the natives thrived on buffalo. They used it as their food, clothing, silverware, their everything. And when the men almost cleaned it out, they had nothing. But the smallpox was more devastating.