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ENDEMIC TYPHUS IN ALABAMA[1]

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I. INTRODUCTION

In a preliminary report made in June of this year before the Conference of State and Provincial Health Authorities, held in Washington, the authors discussed the epidemiological aspects of endemic typhus as it occurs in southern United States. In that report it was noted that there had been a rapid increase in this disease in certain Southern States, as is shown in table 1. That other countries have experienced a similar rise in incidence is evidenced by the figures in table 2.

The distinction between epidemic typhus and the endemic typhus of this country was first recognized in 1898 by Brill. He (1) found in the United States a type of fever which, resembling typhoid, gave a negative Widal reaction. In further studies he (2, 3) demonstrated its similarity to typhus, but showed that it was milder in character and less contagious, only one case as a rule being found in a household. Also he reported that it was most prevalent during the fall of the year instead of late winter or spring. In 1912 Anderson and Goldberger (4) proved that Brill's disease was immunologically identical with Mexican typhus, or tabardillo. Naturally this led to the belief that it was louse borne.

[1] Read before the laboratory section of the American Public Health Association, Pasadena, Calif., Sept. 3, 1934.

Table 1.—*Typhus fever incidence in*

State	1928
Florida	
Georgia	
Alabama	
Louisiana	
Texas	

[1] 6 months only, to July 1.

Table 2.—*Incidence of typh*

Country	
Egypt	
Union of South Africa	
Mexico [2]	
United States	
Poland	
Rumania	

[1] From the Epidemiological Report, Health Section
[2] Deaths.
[3] For 6 months.

Nevertheless, Maxcy (5) (1926) study of Brill's disease, or endemic its noncontagious character and its that the louse was the vector. Sinc of cases appeared among persons ha to believe that rats and mice migh disease was carried to man by fleas, emphasized the fact that Brill's di lower strata of society and bears n step was taken when Dyer, Rumre able to recover the virus of Brill's been found in typhus foci.

Rumreich (7) (1933) has pointed in spite of Maxcy's fundamental w the probable vector of endemic t and arachnids were suspected by vectors were the tropical rat mite, (the body louse, the head louse, the and the tick. It is now obvious th the fact that two distinct clinical (for this reason Maxcy's observations The work of Rumreich, Dyer, and B that there are in eastern and sout which are related both etiologically is endemic typhus, which is transm other is Rocky Mountain spotted fe