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## 04 Causes of Death in the Late 19th Century mentioned in the Register of Deaths, 1893-1907

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**Causes of Death in the Late 19th  
Century  
mentioned in the Register of Deaths,  
1893-1907**

by Karin L. Flippin, HIS 480 (submitted April  
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SOURCE: Webster's New International Dictionary, Reference History Edition  
(Springfield, Massachusetts: G. & C. Merriam Company, 1910).

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- **Abscess** (Abscess/ Abscess of Stomach/ Abscess of Brain) - A circumscribed collection of pus, in any part of the body, formed by the disintegration and stretching of the tissues, usually due to injury, toxication or infection from bacteria.
- **Accident/ Accidental/ Acct. Injury**
- **Acute** (Consumption)/ Acute (Gas-)/ Acute (Pneumonia) - An acute condition is attended with symptoms of some degree of severity and coming to a crisis. Could be acute gastroenteritis - occurring in the hot months and characterized by vomiting and purging, with gripings and cramps; bilious, European, or summer cholera; cholera nostras. Usually caused by imprudence in the diet. *See also consumption/gas/pneumonia.*
- **Angina Pectoris** - A peculiarly painful disease, so named from a sense of suffocating contraction or tightening of the lower part of the chest. It is usually associated with organic changes in the heart or great blood vessels.
- **Apoplexy** (Apoplexy/ Apop. Fit/ Apoplepy/ Appoplexy)
  1. A sudden diminution or loss of consciousness, sensation, and voluntary motion, usually caused by extravasation of blood or serum into the brain or spinal cord.
  2. The condition of any organ or tissue marked by an effusion of blood into its substance as in of the lung. Cerebral: disturbance of brain circulation as by hemorrhage, embolism or thrombosis.

- **Appendicitis** (Appendcites/ Appendecits/ Appendicetis) -Inflammation of the vermiform appendix, either acute or chronic, occurs in the following pathological varieties: Catarrhal (mildest), Ulcerative, Perforative, and Gangrenous (gravest). *See also Catarrh.*
- **Appoletise** - unknown spelling.
- **Asthma** - A disease characterized by difficulty of breathing (due to spasmodic contraction of the bronchi) recurring at intervals, accompanied with a wheezing sound, a sense of constriction in the chest, a cough, and expectoration.
- **B. Consumption** - *See consumption.*
- **Bled to death**
- **Blood Clot/ Blood Clot on Brain**
- **Blood Poison** - *See Septicaemia.*
- **Body Trouble**
- **Born Dead** - *See still born.*
- **Bowels** - Not a condition to be defined. *See diarrhea.*
- **Brain Fever** (Brain Disease/ Brain Trouble) - Fever in which the brain is specially affected; any acute cerebral affection attended by fever.
- **Bright's Disease** (Bright s disease/ Bright's) - Any of several forms of disease of the kidney attended with albumin in the urine, including especially acute and chronic nonsuppurative nephritis. *See chronic nephritis.*
- **Bronchitis** (Bronchitus/ Brouckne Trou-) - Imflammation, acute or chronic, of the bronchial tubes or any part of them.
- **Burned to Death**
- **Bursting of Blood Vessel** - *See rupture.*
- **Cancer** (Cancer and Dropsy/ Cancer of Breast/ Cancer of Stomach/ Cancerous Tumor) - Formerly, any malignant growth, especially one attended with a great pain and ulceration, with cachexia and progressive emaciation...Now, a malignant tumor having it's origin in the epithelial tissue and invading any of the surrounding structures.
- **Catarrh** (Catarah/ Catarrah/ Catarrh of Brain/ Catarrh of Head/ Catarrh of Stomach/ Catarrh on the Breast/ Catarrk/ Catarrk Pneumonia) - An inflammatory affection of any mucous membrane, in which there are congetion, swelling, and an alteration in the quantity and quality of mucous secreted. In America, especially, a chronic inflammation of, and hypersecretion from the membranes of nose or air passages. in England, an acute influenza, resulting from a cold and attended with cough, thirst, lassitude and watery eyes; also, the cold itself. **Catarrh Pneumonia** is an inflammation of the lung tissue associated with

catarrh and with marked evidences of inflammation of the bronchial membranes - often chronic.

- **Chal.** - unknown.
- **Child Com/ Child Comp./ Child. Complications/Childs Complaints** - unknown meaning.
- **Childbirth**
- **Childs Cough** - A cough is a sudden, noisy, and violent expulsion of air from the chest, caused by irritation in the air passages, or by the reflex action of nervous or gastric disorder, etc. See *croup*.
- **Cholera** - Any of a number of diseases; - usually with a distinguishing word. For example, see "*Cholera Infantum*" below.
- **Cholera Infantum** (Cholera Inf/ Cholera Infan/ Cholera Infant/ Cholera Infantile/ Cholera Infantium/ Cholera Infantom) - a disease of infants prevailing in Summer and characterized by vomiting, uncontrollable diarrhea and collapse. The predisposing cause appears to be the hot weather. it is especially fatal in large cities.
- **Chronic** (Diarrhea/ Chronic Gastretis/ Chronic Gastia Catarrah/ Chronic Gastritis/Chronic Illness) - A chronic condition is of a disease of long duration or characterized by slowly progressing symptoms. See *diarrhea, gastritis, and gastric catarrh* below.
- **Chronic Hydrocephalus** (Chronic Hydracipliolus) - Dropsy of the brain especially the ventricles. It is most frequent in infancy and often enlarges the head enormously. It is due, usually, to tubercular meningitis and is marked by atrophy of brain, mental weakness and convulsions. See *dropsy*.
- **Chronic Nephritis** (Chronic Nephriatic) - Inflammation of the kidneys, acute or chronic...Recoveries are frequent unless fitting of Bright's Disease. See *Bright's Disease*.
- **Clonic** (Cloni of Disease) - Having irregular, convulsive motion as clonic, spasm...a sign of certain neuropathies.
- **Cold** (in Jaw) - A disorderd condition, generally of the respiratory tract, produced by exposure; a catarrh.
- **Complication of Diseases** (Com of Disease/ Com. of Dis./ Com. of Diseases/ Combination of Dis./ Comp of Diseases/ Comp. of Dis./ Comp. of Disease/ Comp. of Diseases/ Complication/ Complications/ Complicatoin/ Con of Dis-) - See *disease*; otherwise unknown meaning.
- **Con. of Bowels/ Con. of Bowels & Liver Trouble** - See *bowels, hardening of the liver*, otherwise unknown meaning
- **Concussion** (of Brain) - A condition of lowered functional activity without visible structural changes produced in an organ by a shock, as by a fall or blow.

- **Confinement** - No medical definition.
- **Congestion** (Cong. of Lungs/ Congestion of Brain/ Congestion of Liver/ Conjestion) - Overfullness of the capillary and other blood vessels, etc., in any locality or organ (often producing other morbid symptoms); local hyperaemia, as, arterial congestion, venous congestion, congestion of the lungs.
- **Convulsions** (Connvulsions) -
  1. Spasmodic contraction of the muscles; cramp; tetanus.
  2. A more or less widely distributed unnatural, violent, or involuntary contraction or series of contraction of the muscles; spasm.
- **Consumption** - A progressive wasting away of the body, especially that attended upon pulmonary phthisis, called pulmonary consumption; hence pulmonary phthisis or tuberculosis. *See Phthisis, Tuberculosis.*
- **Cronic Trouble**
- **Croup** (Croup Pneumonia) - Any affection of the larynx or trachea, accompanied by a hoarse, ringing cough and stridulous, difficulty breathing; especially, such an affection when associated with the development of a false membrane in the air passages. *See Diphtheria.*
- **Crushed Both Lumps** - unknown (?lungs).
- **Crushed Land Bank**
- **Debility** - State or quality of being weak; weakness; feebleness; languor.
- **Diabetes** (Diabetis) - A disease which is attended with a persistent; excessive discharge of urine containing no abnormal constituent.
- **Diarrhea** - A morbidly frequent and profuse discharge of loose or fluid evacuations from the intestines, without teresmus; a purging or looseness of the bowels.
- **Diphtheria** (Diphtheria/ Diptheris/ Dipthlheria/ Duptratitheria/ Dyptheris/ Dypratheria) - An acute, febrile, infectious disease in which the air passages, and especially, the throat, become coated with a false membrane produced by the solidification of an inflammatory exudation. It is caused by a specific microorganism, the Klebs-Loffler bacillus.
- **Disease** (of Brain) - An alteration in the state of the body or of some of its organs, interrupting or disturbing the performance of the vital functions.
- **Dropsy** (Dropsey/ Dropsy in the Leg/ Dropsy of the Brain) - An unnatural accumulation of serous fluid in any serous cavity of the body, or in the subcutaneous cellular tissue. The various forms of dropsy affecting different parts of the body are designated by specific names.
- **Drowned/ Drowning**

- **Dysentery** (Disentory/ Dysenterry) - A disease attended with fever, inflammation, and ulceration of the large intestine and characterized by griping pains, constant desire to evacuate bowels and the discharge of mucus and blood.
- **Enlarged Palate** - unknown meaning.
- **Enlargement of Glands**
- **Enteritis** (Enters Colitis) - Inflammation of the intestines.
- **Epilepsy** - A chronic functional disease characterized by paroxysms or fits, occurring at intervals, and attended by sudden loss of consciousness and convulsive motions of the muscles.
- **Eriseafnois** - unknown spelling.
- **Erysipelas** (Erysipelis) - St. Anthony's Fire, an acute febrile disease accompanied with a diffused inflammation of the skin and mucous membranes. Contagious and often epidemic.
- **Eurema** - Could be uremia:
- **Exhaustion** - To drain metaphorically as in one's strength.
- **Explosion**
- **Fall**
- **Farm dice** - unknown meaning.
- **Fatty exemption of the heart** - unknown meaning.
- **Fits** (Fitts) - A sudden violent attack of a disorder; a stroke of disease, especially epilepsy or apoplexy, which produces convulsions or unconsciousness. *See epilepsy, apoplexy.*
- **Fractured Skull**
- **Gangrene** - Mortification of a part of the body caused by interference of local nutrition.
- **Gas of stomach**
- **Gastric Catarrh** (Gastic Catarah) - Of or pertaining to or situated near the stomach. *See catarrh.*
- **Gastritis** - Inflammation of the stomach; especially of its mucous membrane.
- **General Debility** (Gen Debility/ Gen. Debil./ Gen. Delibilty/ Gen. Disability/ General Disability/ Genl. Debility) - *See debility.*
- **Grip** (Gripp) - A spasm of pain. *See influenza.*
- **Grippe** - The influenza or epidemic catarrh.
- **Hardness of liver** - Possibly cirrhosis which is a disease of the liver in which it becomes unusually more dense and fibrous and undergoes degeneration taking on a granular yellow appearance due to coloring of the acini by bile pigments.
- **Heart Ailment**
- **Heart Clot**

- **Heart Disease** / Heart Disease
- **Heart Failure** / Heart Failure and Dropsy/Heartfailure
- **Heart Trouble**
- **Heat Prostration**
- **Heat Trouble** - unclear if this refers to "heat" or "heart"
- **Hemorrhage** (Hem of Bowels/ Hemorage/ Hemorrhage of Lungs) - Any discharge of blood from the blood vessels.
- **Indigestion** - Lack of digestion; a failure in the normal changes undergone by food in the alimentary canal; dyspepsia.
- **Inf. Kidneys** - ?inflammation. *See nephritis, inflammation, Bright's Disease.*
- **Inf. Rheumatism** - ?inflammation. *See Rhuematism, inflammation.*
- **Infection in Bladder** -
- **Infirmity of Age** - *See old age, internally infirmed.*
- **Infl. of Bowels/ Inflaimaiton of Fowilies/ Inflam Bowls/ Inflammation of the Bowels/ Inflation of Bowels/ Inflation of the b----/ Inflimation of Bowels** - *See inflammation, bowels.*
- **Inflammation** (of Lungs/ Inflam. of Bladder/ Inflammation/ Inflammation of Brain) - A morbid condition consisting in congestion of blood vessels and exudation of serum and blood corpuscles with resulting hyperplasia (increased WBC count). It is manifested outwardly by redness and swelling attended with heat and pain.
- **Injury** - Injuries by Falling/ Injury of Spine
- **Insanity** - Insanity takes so many forms that a satisfactory rigid or narrow definition can not be made. It may be congenital, as idiocy, or acquired. It does not include certain states of transitory mental disorder, such as trances, epilepsy, hysteria, delusions, etc. insanity may be due to defective development, acquired disease or natural decay.
- **Insomnia** - Prolonged inability to obtain due sleep.
- **Interic Fever** - If meant as enteric, of or pertaining to the ... alimentary canal; intestinal.
- **Internal Injuries**
- **Internally Infirmed** - Infirmed is not a medical term meaning not firm or sound physically; weak; frail...especially as a result of age.
- **Inward Cancer** - *See cancer.*
- **Inward Pressure**
- **Inward Spasms** - *See spasms.*
- **Kicked by a Horse**
- **Kidney Disease** (Kidney Comp./ Kidney Trouble/ Kidney Trouble) - *See chronic nephritis, Bright's Disease.*
- **Killed by Cars**

- **Killed on Railroad** / Killed on RR/ Killed on Wilmington & Northern Railroad/ Killed Reading Railroad
- **La Grippe** - *See grippe.*
- **Leukemia of Blood**
- **Liver Disease** (Liver Trouble) - *See disease, hardness of liver.*
- **Lock Jaw** (Lockjaw) - A variety of tetanus in which the jaws are locked rigidly together; trismus.
- **Lung Trouble** - *See disease, bronchitis.*
- **Marasmus** (Marasamus/ Marasumus/ Merasmus/ Miasma/ Mirasmus) - Progressive emaciation and general wasting due to enfeebled constitution rather than any specific or ascertainable cause.
- **Meningitis** - *See meningitis*; could also be laryngitis.
- **Measles** (Measles & Consumption) - A contagious febrile disorder, commencing with catarrhal symptoms, ascoryza, conjunctivitis, and cough and marked by the appearance on the third day of an eruption of distinct red circular spots.
- **Membraneous Croup/ Memb. Croup/ Membrain Croup/ Membrarrous croup** - *See croup.*
- **Meningitis** (Menegetes/ Menengetis/ Meningetis/ Meningitus of the Brain/ Meningitus of the Brain/ Menngatis) - An inflammation of the meninges which are the membranes enveloping the brain and spinal cord.
- **Mind Failure** - *See insantiy*; could be brain death.
- **Mumb. Group** - *See membraneous croup.*
- **Natural Causes/ Natural Injure**
- **Nervous Prostration** - Prostration is the act of lying flat. Figuratively, can be a great depression. No medical definition.
- **Neuralgia of the Heart** - A very acute pain; exacerbating or intermitting which follows the course of a nervous branch and extends to its ramifications.
- **Obstruction of Bowels** - *See bowels.*
- **Old Age (2x)** - *See internally infirmed.*
- **Operation**
- **Palsy** - *See Paralysis*
- **Paralysis** (Para etc/ Para of Brain/ Paralatic Stroke/ Paraletic Stroke/ Paralasis/ Paralitic Stroke/ Paralysis/ Paralyis/ Paralysis of Heart/ Paralysis of Thoat./ Paraylsis/ Paresis/ Parletic stroke/ Parlyetic/ parylasis) -
  1. Abolition of function, whether complete or partial; especially, the loss of the power of voluntary motion...or of sensation...in any part of the body.



2. A chronic, progressive, nervous disease, occurring in advanced life and marked by muscular tremor and weakness and a peculiar gait termed festination; Parkinson's Disease.
- **Peatoris** - unknown spelling.
  - **Pendicitis** - *See appendicitis.*
  - **Peritonitis** (Perationitis/ Pereontis/ Peribonetis/ Peritometichs/ Peritonetis/ Pertonites) - Inflammation of the smooth transparent serous membrane that lines the cavity of the abdomen (peritoneum).
  - **Phapoplexy** - *See apoplexy.*
  - **Phthisic** - A wasting or consumption of the tissue; -formerly applied to many wasting diseases, but now usually restricted to pulmonary phthisis or consumption. *See tuberculosis, consumption.*
  - **Pistol Shot**
  - **Pleurisy** -
  - **Pneumonia** (Pneumnonia) - Inflammation of the lungs; usually due to infection.
  - **Preititis** - unknown spelling.
  - **Premature/ Premature Birth**
  - **Pulm. Croup** - *See croup.*
  - **Pyrontus** - unknown spelling.
  - **Quinsy** - An inflammation of the throat, or parts adjacent; especially, of the fauces or tonsils, attended by swelling, painful and impeded deglutition and inflammatory fever; suppurative tonsillitis.
  - **Railroad/ Railroad Wreck**
  - **Ran Over by Car**
  - **Rheumatism** (Rhemmatism/ Rheru of the Heart/ Rheumatological Heart/ Rheumatiski) - A constitutional disease, which may be acute, subacute or chronic manifesting itself in a variety of morbid states and characterized by pain of various types. Objective symptoms may be fever, local redness, and swelling when acute,...great deformity may result. The disease attacks joints, muscles, or serous structures.
  - **Rupture** (Ruptur of Blood Vessel/ Rupturn Gall) - Hernia; otherwise refers to a breaking.
  - **Salt Rheum** (Salt Rume) - Any of various cutaneous eruptions; especially those of eczema.
  - **Scarlet Fever** - An acute contagious febrile disease characterized by inflammation of the fauces and a scarlet rash appearing usually on the second day and ending in desquamation about the sixth or seventh day; scarletina. It is frequently complicated with disease of the kidney.
  - **Scrofula** - A morbid condition of a tubercular nature manifesting itself especially in a chronic enlargement and cheesy degeneration of the

lymphatic glands, particularly of those of the neck, with a tendency to the development of chronic intractable inflammations of the skin, mucous membrane, bones, joints, and other parts; Tuberculosis Lymphadenitis; King's Evil. It is most common in childhood.

- **Senile** (Debility/ Senile Disability) - Of or pertaining to, proceeding from or chance of old age or the infirmities of old age. *See internally infirmed.*
- **Septicaemia** (Septacunines) - A poisoned condition of the blood due to pathogenic bacteria; blood poisoning. marked by chills, fever, prostration and inflammation of the serous membranes and of the lungs, kidneys and other organs.
- **Sick from Birth**
- **Softening of Brain** (Softening of the Brain/ Soft of Brain) - A localized softening of the brain substance due to hemorrhage or inflammation. three stages: red, yellow, and white.
- **Spasm** (Spasms) - An involuntary and unnatural contraction of one or more muscles or muscular fibers.
- **Spinal Meningitis** (Spinal/ Spinal Disease/ Spinal Menagitis/ Spinal Menangitis/ Spinal Menegitis/ Spinal Meningetis/ Spinal Meningitus/ Spinal Trouble/ Spine Meningitus) - *See meningitis*; could also be a severing of spinal cord or other disease.
- **Still Born** (Stillborn) - The birth of a dead fetus.
- **Stomach Trouble**
- **Strangulated Hernia** (Strangulate Harnie) - A hernia so compressed in some part of the channel through which it protrudes as to arrest its circulation and cause swelling of the protruded part. A hernia is a protrusion consisting of an organ or part projecting through some natural or accidental opening in the walls of its natural cavity, as in of brain, lungs, bowels. *See rupture.*
- **Strangulation** (Strangulization) - inordinate compression or constriction of a tube or part, as of the throat, especially such as causes suspension of breathing or of the passage of contents.
- **Stroke** -
- **Struck by Engine/ Struck with Cars**
- **Suicide**
- **Summer-com/ Summer Complaint** - Could be acute gastroenteritis
- **Sunstroke** - An affection, often fatal, due to exposure to the sun or excessive heat and marked by sudden prostration with symptoms like those of apoplexy.
- **Teething**
- **Tenility** - *See senility.*

- **Tuberculosis** (Tuberculosis of Brain) - An infectious disease...cause of which is the tubercle bacillus...pulmonary phthisis or consumption. Among the most frequent sites of tuberculosis are the lungs, intestinal tract, lymphatic glands, serous membranes, bones, skin, brain, fallopian tubes, uterus and spleen. Symptoms vary with localization. The disease affects, besides men, many of the lower animals, as cattle, hogs, dogs, cats, monkeys, rabbits, and guinea pigs.
- **Tumor** (Tumor by Ears/ Tumor in the Stomach) - An abnormal mass of tissue not inflamed and independent in character arising without obvious cause from cells of preexisting tissue possessing no physiologic function and characteristically unrestrained in growth and structure.
- **Typhoid Fever** (Typhoid Fever/ Typhoid/ Typhoid Pneumonia) - An infectious febrile disease caused by a bacillus introduced into the system with the food or drinking water and characterized by catarrh of intestines, enlargement and necrosis of the Peyerian glands, enlarged spleen and mesenteric glands...a peculiar eruption appearing on the seventh to eleventh days consisting of small, slightly elevated rose colored spots which disappear on pressure and come out in successive crops and often diarrhea with discharges resembling pea soup in appearance; enteric fever.
- **Ulcerated Stomach**
- **Vertigo** - Dizziness or swimming of the head...the person affected finds it difficult to maintain erect posture; often precedes attacks of epilepsy or cerebral hemorrhage.
- **Wasting of Flesh** - *See consumption, marasmus.*
- **Water on Brain** - *See chronic hydrocephalous.*
- **Weakness**
- **Whooping Cough** - An infectious disease usually of childhood characterized by violent convulsive cough returning by fits and consisting of several expirations; followed by a sonorous inspiration or whoop; pertusis.
- **Wine Disease**
- **Womb of Blood**