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## Handwriting example 18

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# Handwriting Example XVIII

12	16	Andan, Worg. Jorras Jgnells dotter Maria Lifa,	V. Pastor	fastig sjuk	39
10	16	Andan, Gården Sveri Jansson från Uggaleberg, fuggnad, felen	V. Pastor	ungars	6
13	16	Andan, Gården Anders Larsson från Löfvalången fä. felen	V. Pastor	ungars	12
14	16	Andan, M. Nils Bengtss. Gust. Margeta Larsdotter från Udvaland, nor. söm.	V. Pastor	ungars	55
13	21	Andan, Linnéstr. ja Arresten Nils Björson, gift,	V. Pastor	ungars	46
14	16	Andan, Linnéstr. Olof Olfsons dotter, Stina,	V. Pastor	sin/sot	25
14	16	Andan, Gunnarstr. O. Galaber Kjellborn, bryggt af	V. Pastor	fall af sjuk	32 6

This document comes from the Death records for Karlstad in August 1772. It was chosen to be presented in SAG because of its unusual honesty in describing the causes of death.

On this page at least four persons are described as having died from hunger, which is very unusual. It is much more common to write that the cause of death was “unknown children’s disease” or “old age frailty.”

In 1749 the Swedish agency for population statistics (*Tabellverket*) was founded. Among the many things they were curious about were the causes of death, and from then on the clergymen were required to note what the people in the parish had died from. Then the clergymen had to fill out a huge form, with classified causes of death and send them in to *Tabellverket*, where statistics for the whole country were compiled. It was a good idea, but

there was a snag. There were not many medical doctors available for the general public, so who decided what they died from?

It also became one of the many tasks for the rural clergy, but they had no education in medicine. They had to rely on some books on medicine, and try to figure out what illness the symptoms pointed to.

This lack of knowledge makes for many uncertain diagnoses, and the researcher can never be sure that the ancestors died from what is written in the death records. It is different when someone drowned in a nearby river, fell into a charcoal stack, or was eaten by wolves – those were clear accidents and could not be mistaken for anything else.

The names of illnesses have changed during the centuries, and one often wonders what was meant by *twinsot* or *ältan*? A good help, un-

fortunately only in Swedish, is the *Svenska sjukdomsnamn i gångna tider*, by Gunnar Lagerkranz, latest printing in 2003. It explains about 900 different illnesses. It can be bought from the Swedish Federation of Genealogical Societies (*Sveriges Släktforskarförbund*) for about \$35 + shipping.

Some names of illnesses are also found in “Swedish Genalogical Dictionary” by the late Phyllis J. Pladsen, Joseph C. Huber, and Eric B. Pladsen (2000). It seems to be still available from Glenn W. Pladsen for \$25 + shipping.

(see page 30 for web links.)

The transcription is on page 24.