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Houghtaling Mausoleum: Biography Exercise

David Harrison Houghtaling, his wife, Laura, and his daughter-in-law, Irene, are interred in a family mausoleum in Woodlawn Cemetery, which was designed by C.E. Tayntor & Co. David, throughout his life, had held multiple occupations, in all of which he gained a fair amount of recognition and success; he was a tea merchant and a stockbroker, among other positions, and he served as Brooklyn Park Commissioner for Mayor Seth Low. David Harrison Houghtaling was born on May 17th, 1834, in Kingston, NY, a city so old that it was a major trading site for the Dutch in the mid-17th century. David himself traced his ancestry back to these times; his fourth-great-grandfather Jan Willemse Hoogteyling was a prominent New-Netherland settler, who came to Kingston from Loosdrecht, Holland in 1661.¹ David's wife Laura (née McAllister) was born on September 26, 1837 in Waterloo, Seneca County, NY, to John McAllister. Apart from being a "homemaker" according to the census, there is not much other information about Laura Houghtaling's life. They married on January 26, 1858. They had two children: a son, Warren, born in 1860, and a daughter, Martha, born in 1865.

After David and Laura had married in 1858, they lived in Brooklyn, where their children were born. David had a privileged education in Kingston, graduating from Kingston Academy. As mentioned David's background in Kingston has dated back to Kingston's first years; his daughter, Martha, was a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution, tracing her ancestry back to David's great grandfather, Johannes Hoogteyling, who was part of the Ulster

¹ The written Dutch that is found in and around Kingston is largely from the 17th century and was not yet completely standardized. Although in Dutch the letter 'g' is pronounced similarly to the 'ch' in 'loch', the Anglicized "Houghtaling" renders the 'gh' silent.

County militia during the Revolutionary War. Of course, Martha's membership in the Daughters of the Revolutions means that David as well could trace his ancestry back to the Revolutionary War. Although no longer a resident of Kingston, David continued his involvement with the Kingston community, culminating in the donation of a memorial window in honor of his late parents at the Old Dutch Church. However, David would later move out of Kingston to pursue a career in tea trading, for which he became successful and known.

By 1850 David began to work as a clerk for a tea trader in New York City. By 1860, he had become successful enough to start his own business importing tea. In 1868, David's business partner was Bryon D. Herrick, but before 1868, he had a third partner, by the name of Billinge. Below is a check for the National Shoe Leather Bank, with David H. Houghtaling and Bryon D. Herrick's tea company advertising on a vignette on the left. The vignette depicts two Chinese men carrying a case of tea.² In fact, Herrick and Houghtaling sold teas such as Oolong and Hyson, both from southern China.



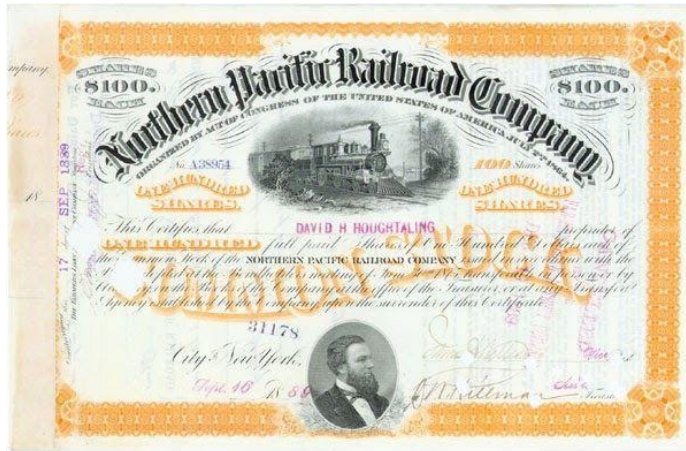
Herrick and Houghtaling had moved their base to various places throughout the Financial District in Manhattan. In the 1880s, while he was an independent tea merchant, his company,

² The characters engraved on the cases are printed backwards and the incorrect stroke quality suggest that the artist of this vignette was not familiar with the Chinese language. The reversed characters show that the artist had etched the characters facing correctly on the plate, which caused the print to come out backwards. The Chinese men are wearing hairstyles known as "queues", where all the hair on one's head is shaved off save for a long braid. They were made compulsory under penalty of treason by the Qing Dynasty. My great-great grandfather had removed his queue once he moved to America. My great-grandfather arrived in 1871, twelve years before Chinese Exclusion.

D.H. Houghtaling & Co., was located at 142 Front Street. While in Brooklyn, the Houghtaling family had lived in ward 12, and by 1877, they moved to a brownstone house at 321 Clinton Avenue. According to Brownstoner, the brownstone was built in 1874 for J. H. Lounsbery, but Lounsbery died before he was able to live there (Morris). In 1877, the Lounsbery estate had sold the house to David. While in Brooklyn, David had led a very involved life, with memberships in organizations such as the Union League Club, the Oxford Club, of which he was a founding member, and of the Holland Society, which sought to collect and preserve information about the Dutch colony of New Netherland. By 1880, the census reports that David lived with his wife and two children, as well as his mother-in-law, Eunice, and two live-in servants. David at this time was a stock broker. Between 1882 and 1885, he served as Brooklyn Park Commissioner under Mayor Seth Low, as David was also a staunch Republican. In 1894, the Houghtalings moved to the Gramercy Park neighborhood. David's wife, Laura, died in 1902, and was interred in Woodlawn.

David's son Warren married his first wife, Irene, in 1884. Unfortunately, Irene died at 30 years old in 1893 of pneumonia. Irene is also interred in the mausoleum at Woodlawn. However, the mausoleum was built in 1901, suggesting that Irene was initially buried in another location.³ Although It is unusual for the head of the family's daughter-in-law to be interred in the same mausoleum without her husband, Irene had predeceased her husband by nearly thirty years, and Warren had remarried in 1897 and was subsequently buried with his second wife's family in Sharon, CT.

³ Since Irene's funeral was at the Houghtaling residence at 321 Clinton, there is a chance that she was interred nearby before being moved to Woodlawn.



According to Warren's diary from 1906, as well as the New York City directory, both Warren and David were stock brokers at this time.⁴ The image below is a receipt for David, having bought stock from the Northern Pacific Railroad Company. In Warren's diary, he shares his frequent contact with his father David, with whom he often dined.

David also spent time with his grandchildren during this time. David's other child, Martha, also frequently appeared in Warren's diary. She had married Francis Abbot Ingalls, and had two children, Laura and Francis Jr. Laura Houghtaling Ingalls was a successful pioneering aviator, who had been the first woman pilot to fly east-to-west across America.⁵

Later in life, David lived with his paternal granddaughter, Irene H, in Murray Hill, along with two Swedish servants, one Irish servant, and two coachmen, born in New Jersey. David died after a short illness in 1913 at his home in Murray Hill.⁶ At the time, he was survived by his two children and four grandchildren. The funeral was held at his home, and he was interred in the mausoleum at Woodlawn. Along with David, his wife Laura and daughter-in-law Irene are also interred in the same mausoleum.

⁴ Warren had expressed great concern for the markets after the San Francisco earthquake. Much of his entries had been about the stock market, suggesting that he had to keep close attention to them in his daily life.

⁵ Laura Houghtaling Ingalls was not able to break Amelia Earhart's transcontinental record, as the Pacific-to-Atlantic tailwinds are more favorable.

⁶ Irene H. was Warren's first daughter, whom he had with Irene W.H., who had died in 1893.

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