

Jesse Kling

Andrew Dolkart & Kate Reggev

Studio I

October 9, 2020

### **GEORGE HOTCHKISS OF WOODLAWN CEMETERY'S HOTCHKISS MAUSOLEUM**

The Hotchkiss Mausoleum, situated within Woodlawn Cemetery's Chestnut Hill section, is a formidable Doric temple-fronted granite structure. With its rusticated ashlar walls and wrap-around full Doric entablature, its construction was instigated by a George Hotchkiss, a merchant and business-owner in New York's meatpacking industry, several years before his death in 1919.

George Hotchkiss, born into the Hotchkiss family of Derby, Connecticut in 1836, grew up to become a successful wholesale butcher in Ansonia, Connecticut, where he raised a family with his wife Esther. By 1900, as a widower, he had moved with his daughter Esther S. to a townhouse on Manhattan's Upper West Side, and he had established himself as an affluent meat merchant with his own wholesale meat business in Manhattan.

George Hotchkiss was born to the farmer Eli Hotchkiss and his wife Susan in March 1836. The Hotchkiss family must have been well-established in the town of Derby in New Haven County—after the town (and later city) of Ansonia was formed from the northern section of Derby in 1889, a Lockwood Hotchkiss served as mayor from 1899 to 1901, and a neighborhood of the city is today annotated on maps as Hotchkiss Heights. In 1880, George Hotchkiss, by this point a wholesale butcher, lived in a substantial house at 2 Union

Street in Ansonia (Union Street was a short dead-end street lined with multi-winged homes).<sup>1</sup> As the head of household, George lived with his wife Esther E. and children Eli Hubbell (age 22), Frank (age 20), and Etta (Esther S., age 6). Eli Hubbell and Frank are also listed as wholesale butchers by this point in the U.S. Census.<sup>2</sup> Esther died in 1885,<sup>3</sup> and was later reinterred at the Woodlawn mausoleum.

By the census of 1900, George Hotchkiss's life had changed substantially. Now a widower, he was living in a townhouse at 13 West 87th Street on Manhattan's Upper West Side, half a block in from Central Park West. His occupation is listed as "Merchant in Wholesale Beef"—having shed the "butcher" monicker. Only his daughter Esther (recorded by the census as Etta in 1880) lived with him. Their household had three domestic workers: Ella M. Rollins of Maine, listed as the housekeeper, and Annie Ross and Maggie Kerrigan, two young recent immigrants from Ireland, as servants.<sup>4</sup> Upon Ella Rollins's death in 1916, she became the first person to be interred at the Hotchkiss Mausoleum—a testament to her close, years-long relationship with the Hotchkiss

---

<sup>1</sup> "Ansonia, Conn., Plate 5," 50 ft. to an inch (New York: Sanborn Map and Publishing Co., March 1884), Geography and Map Collection, Library of Congress.

<sup>2</sup> 1880 United States Census, Derby, New Haven County, Connecticut (Enumeration District 067, page 179B), digital image, s.v. "Geo. Hotchkiss," *AncestryLibrary.com*.

<sup>3</sup> "Headstone Inscriptions, Pine Grove Cemetery, Ansonia, Connecticut," *Hale Collection of Connecticut Cemetery Inscriptions and Newspaper Notices, 1629-1934* (Hartford: Connecticut State Library), 96.

<sup>4</sup> 1900 United States Census, New York, New York County, New York (Enumeration District 0517, page 179B), digital image, s.v. "George Hotchkiss," *AncestryLibrary.com*.

family (Rollins was listed in the Hotchkiss household during all censuses between 1900 and 1915).<sup>5</sup>

The 1900 *Trow Business Directory of Greater New York*, in its catalogue of the industry and commerce of the newly consolidated five boroughs, lists George Hotchkiss's business as "Hotchkiss George & Co (Ltd) Mnht Mkt."<sup>6</sup> "Mnht Mkt" likely refers to Manhattan Market—one of the city's old nineteenth-century food markets—as the location for Hotchkiss's business. If this description is indeed referring to Manhattan Market, Hotchkiss would have fallen into a long tradition of meat merchants doing business at New York's municipal markets. Manhattan Market was among the city's thirteen municipal markets established by the first half of the nineteenth century. An iron-trussed, barrel-vaulted Italianate structure, it stood on Mangin Street, near the East River on Manhattan's Lower East Side. The market was divided into three sections—a fish market, a produce market, and a meat market. The meat market section was lined with butcher's counters along either wall. According to *The Encyclopedia of New York City*, "Butchers were among the most influential figures in markets . . . they usually wore high hats and long-tailed coats." Markets were messy, chaotic places: "Few municipal regulations or local statutes governed

---

<sup>5</sup> 1900 U.S. Census, New York, NY (E.D. 0517, page 179B).

1905 New York State Census, New York, New York County (Election District 4, Assembly District 21, page 53), digital image, s.v. "Ella Rollins," *AncestryLibrary.com*.

1910 United States Census, New York, New York County, New York (Enumeration District 0579, page 8A), digital image, s.v. "George Hotchkiss," *AncestryLibrary.com*.

1915 New York State Census, New York, New York County (Election District 3, Assembly District 17, page 23), digital image, s.v. "George Hotchkiss," *AncestryLibrary.com*.

<sup>6</sup> *The Trow Business Directory of Greater New York (Five Boroughs Combined)*, Vol. III (New York: Trow Directory, Printing and Bookbinding Co., 1900), 197.

the markets before 1900...Corruption remained unchecked, and markets were also known for their filth and stench and for the congestion they caused on local streets.”<sup>7</sup> After 1870, slaughterhouses were constrained by the New York Board of Health to only operate west of 10th Avenue and East of 2nd Avenue—within two blocks of the Hudson and East Rivers. Riverside locations were convenient for the meatpacking industry—here, they were able to receive livestock shipments by river from the stockyards on the west side of the Hudson River in New Jersey, where railroads from the west had their termini.<sup>8</sup>

After George Hotchkiss died in 1919, he would be the second of his family to be interred at the Woodlawn Cemetery mausoleum. His son, Eli Hubbell, preceded him in death by two years in 1917 when he was 59.<sup>9</sup> Eli Hubbell Hotchkiss had achieved his own business success in his short life: by 1900, he lived with his wife Julia and their daughter Gertrude in a stately Queen Anne house still standing at 4 Arch Street in Norwalk, Connecticut, along with Irish immigrant servant Norah Driscoll.<sup>10</sup> His occupation in 1910 is listed as “Manufacturer in Stores.”<sup>11</sup> By the time of his death seven years later, Eli Hubbell had

---

<sup>7</sup> Jackson, Kenneth T., ed., *The Encyclopedia of New York City* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 729.

<sup>8</sup> Jackson, ed., *Encyclopedia of New York City*, 746.

<sup>9</sup> “Died - Hotchkiss,” *The New York Times*, March 17, 1917, 13.

<sup>10</sup> 1900 United States Census, Norwalk, Fairfield County, Connecticut (Enumeration District 88, sheet 11), digital image, s.v. “E Hubbell Hotchkiss,” *AncestryLibrary.com*.

<sup>11</sup> 1910 United States Census, Norwalk, Fairfield County, Connecticut (Enumeration District 98, sheet 2), digital image, s.v. “Eli H Hotchkiss,” *AncestryLibrary.com*.

moved to Daytona, Florida.<sup>12</sup> Nonetheless, he was entombed back at the mausoleum his father commissioned at Woodlawn.

George Hotchkiss died at the age of 84 in Stamford, Connecticut on August 19th, 1919, as recorded in a brief paid *New York Times* obituary.<sup>13</sup> Just days prior to his death, he transferred ownership of the 87th Street row house to his daughter Esther.<sup>14</sup> In the 1920 Census, Esther is recorded as still living at the house on 87th Street, along with three servants—one of them, Annie Clarkin, was recorded as already living and working there by 1915.<sup>15</sup> Esther sold the house between 1924 and 1930, and as of the 1930 Census, she was living as a lodger at Button Hall, then a high-end apartment hotel on Broadway between West 85th and 86th Streets.<sup>16</sup> After she died in 1954 at the age of 80, she was the last person to be interred in the family's Woodlawn Cemetery mausoleum.

The Hotchkiss Mausoleum may not exhibit any overt references to the lives of its internees in its architecture, but perhaps that is precisely the point—from the outside, the mausoleum is indistinguishable in its Greek temple

---

<sup>12</sup> “Died - Hotchkiss,” 1917, 13.

<sup>13</sup> “Died - Hotchkiss.” *The New York Times*, August 20, 1919, 15.

<sup>14</sup> “Real Estate Transfers,” *The New York Times*, August 12, 1919, 23.

<sup>15</sup> 1920 United States Census, New York, New York County, New York (Enumeration District 666, page 7A), digital image, s.v. “Esther Hotchkiss.” *AncestryLibrary.com*. 1915 New York State Census, New York, New York County (Election District 0517, Assembly District 17, page 23), Digital image, s.v. “George Hotchkiss,” *AncestryLibrary.com*.

<sup>16</sup> 1924 New York, New York Voter List (5th Election District, page 3), digital image, s.v. “Ester S. Hotchkiss,” *AncestryLibrary.com*.

1930 United States Census, New York, New York County, New York (Enumeration District 0422, page 9B), digital image, s.v. “Esther S. Hotchkiss,” *AncestryLibrary.com*.

form from a mausoleum of a lawyer, or of a financier. The fact that its patron was a self-made meatpacking merchant, who worked his way up from being a butcher in small-town Connecticut to being a wholesale meat business owner in Manhattan is entirely obscured—instead, the word “Hotchkiss” on the edifice, stripped of any context, conveys generically that this was an important New York family of means. The epitaph on the mausoleum’s Tiffany-like stained-glass back window reads “AFTER LIFE’S PAINS AND PLEASURES REST.” Perhaps in their vagueness, these words supply the one hint that the Hotchkiss’s success did not necessarily come easy.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 1870 United States Census, Derby, New Haven County, Connecticut. Roll M593\_111, page 86B. Digital image, s.v. "Geo Hotchkiss," *AncestryLibrary.com*.
- 1880 United States Census, Derby, New Haven County, Connecticut. Enumeration District 067, page 179B. Digital image, s.v. "Geo. Hotchkiss," *AncestryLibrary.com*.
- 1900 United States Census, New York, New York County. Enumeration District 0517, page 2. Digital image, s.v. "George Hotchkiss," *AncestryLibrary.com*.
- 1900 United States Census, Norwalk, Fairfield County, Connecticut. Enumeration District 88, sheet 11. Digital image, s.v. "E Hubbell Hotchkiss," *AncestryLibrary.com*.
- 1905 New York State Census, New York, New York County. Election District 4, Assembly District 21, page 53. Digital image, s.v. "Ella Rollins," *AncestryLibrary.com*.
- 1910 United States Census, Norwalk, Fairfield County, Connecticut. Enumeration District 98, sheet 2. Digital image, s.v. "Eli H Hotchkiss," *AncestryLibrary.com*.
- 1915 New York State Census, New York, New York County. Election District 3, Assembly District 17, page 23. Digital image, s.v. "George Hotchkiss," *AncestryLibrary.com*.
- 1920 United States Census, New York, New York County, New York. Enumeration District 666, page 7A. Digital image, s.v. "Esther Hotchkiss," *AncestryLibrary.com*.
- 1924 New York, New York Voter List. 5th Election District, page 3. Digital image, s.v. "Ester S. Hotchkiss," *AncestryLibrary.com*.
- 1930 United States Census, New York, New York County, New York. Enumeration District 0422, page 9B. Digital image, s.v. "Esther S. Hotchkiss," *AncestryLibrary.com*.
- "Ansonia, Conn., Plate 5." 50 ft. to an inch. New York: Sanborn Map and Publishing Co., March 1884. Geography and Map Collection. Library of Congress. [http://www.loc.gov/resource/g3784am.g3784am\\_g010961884/?sp=5](http://www.loc.gov/resource/g3784am.g3784am_g010961884/?sp=5).
- "Died - Hotchkiss." *The New York Times*. March 17, 1917.
- "Died - Hotchkiss." *The New York Times*, August 20, 1919.
- "Headstone Inscriptions, Pine Grove Cemetery, Ansonia, Connecticut." *Hale Collection of Connecticut Cemetery Inscriptions and Newspaper Notices, 1629-1934*. Hartford: Connecticut State Library.

Jackson, Kenneth T., ed. *The Encyclopedia of New York City*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995.

“Real Estate Transfers.” *The New York Times*, August 12, 1919.

*The Trow Business Directory of Greater New York (Five Boroughs Combined)*. Vol. III. New York: Trow Directory, Printing and Bookbinding Co., 1900.

