

Thomas Gibbons Hawkes

Founder of Some of Corning's Leading Enterprises Died Last Night

DIED---July 7, 1913, at 5:07 P.M. at his home in Corning, Thomas Gibbons Hawkes, president of T. G. Hawkes & Co., president of the Steuben Glass Works and president of the Capfield Brake Company. Funeral service Wednesday afternoon at 3 o'clock at the residence 24 East Second Street, Rev. Malcolm S. Johnston, rector of Christ Church, in charge of the service. Interment will be made in the Hope Cemetery annex.

From the humblest beginnings Thomas G. Hawkes built up in Corning the largest deep cut glass plant in America and the largest business of its kind in the world. Starting in business for himself in 1880 with a force of less than 20 men he built his business upon so sound a basis that 20 years later the incorporated company which bore his name employed 400 men. His glass cutting plant did not limit the field of his business activity in Corning, however, as in 1904, collaborating with Frederick Carder he established Steuben Glass Works, makers of blown glass. In 1899 he had been a partner in the establishment of the Canfield Brake Company of Corning.

Photo of Thomas Gibbons Hawkes

Thomas Gibbons Hawkes was born at Surmount, the large estate of his father near City of Cork, Ireland, September 25, 1846, the son of Quayle Welsted Hawkes, an Irish gentleman, and Jane Gibbons, second daughter of Thomas Gibbons, banker of Dublin. He was one of nine sons and four daughters. His father died in 1903 at the age of 93 years.

Chance placed Thomas G. Hawkes in the cut glass industry where he was destined to become the leader of his time. He originally intended to become a civil engineer, and he had studied for two years at Queen's College, city of Cork, with that purpose, when a spirit of adventure and a desire to see America caused him to leave his studies and come with a former class mate, who was then purser on a transatlantic liner, to New York City. He landed in New York in the winter of 1863 at the age of 17. On the voyage across the water his overcoat had been lost

and half of the 10 pounds (\$50) he had brought with him had to be spent soon after landing in the purchasing of a new coat. Mr. Hawkes liked the spirit of the new country and the city of New York but after looking about unsuccessfully for employment for some time and becoming discouraged he was at the pier to engage passage back to Ireland on a steamer when chance gave him an acquaintanceship with John Hoare, the senior member of the firm of Hoare & Dailey, practical glass cutters then doing business in connection with the Brooklyn Flint Glass Company, later destined to become the Corning Glass Works. This meeting resulted in the Employment of Mr. Hawkes in the works of Hoare & Dailey as a draughtsman. He was in the employ of the firm in 1868 when John Hoare, the senior member of the firm came to Corning to establish a new factory here.

Mr. Hawkes continued with John Hoare for the next 12 years during a part of which he held an interest in the company. He had not long been satisfied to remain a draughtsman, and had begun at once to lay the foundation of his future success by mastering the details of the glass cutting art. For the business his character seems to have had a peculiar adaptability.

Working at the bench as a glass cutter for John Hoare, Mr. Hawkes rapidly became one of the most expert workmen in the employ of the firm. He rose to the position of foreman, and later acquired an insight into the sales department by taking the product of the shops to the large cities of the country where he sold to the trade. One of the things Mr. Hawkes treasured most in after life was a gold watch he took with him when he left the foremanship of the John Hoare works, as a token of appreciation and the esteem in which he was held by the employees who had worked under him there.

Chance placed Thomas G. Hawkes in the cut glass business, but it was no chance the placed his firm in the place it occupies in the trade. The rules followed by Mr. Hawkes in building up his business were so simple and easy to follow that they are often overlooked. Honesty, thoroughness, and the closest personal attention to every detail of the business spelled the success of T. G. Hawkes and the firm which came to bear his name. Mr. Hakes saw from the start that he could achieve success in the comparatively new field of manufacturing activity only by placing

on the market a product that was superior to that offered by foreign competitors and who were satisfied to turn out a cheap article, that would sell readily and yield temporarily large and speedy profits. In the face of temptation to meet competitors who were striving for his market Mr. Hawkes did not lower the quality of his product or the standard of excellence which had come to be associated with the Hawkes name.

In 1880 Thomas G. Hawkes left the employ of John Hoare and established in the building of 70-72 West market Street a glass cutting shop bearing his own name. The building is located almost directly across the street from the present manufactory and has since been used as a tobacco warehouse. Mr. Hawkes lacked large capital and the business was started in a small way with less than 20 employees. In a year more room was necessary to meet the needs of the developing business and the shops were moved across the street to their present location. There shop after shop was added as the business continued to grow and expand under the careful personal supervision of Mr. Hawkes which he kept up at his works almost to the end of his life.

In 1889 the business was incorporated under the name of T. G. Hawkes & Co. This same year witnessed the awarding of the grand prize at the Paris Exposition to the products of the Hawkes factories in competition with those of the world. Many pieces included in this display at the exposition were purchased by the nobility of Europe and not a few went into royal households. Since then the Hawkes' glass has taken prizes at the expositions wherever it has been displayed. Two noted pieces of glassware, the product of the Hawkes' shops which have attracted attention on both sides of the Atlantic were the crystal bowls described in the Pottery Gazette as "the finest pieces ye made by any manufacturer and for beauty and perfection of cutting they are unexcelled."

Glass engraving was a feature of Hawkes shops almost from the beginning. The Hawkes shops practically introduced the engraving of glassware to the country. Today such has been the growth of the demand for this highest product of human skill as applied to glassware that in importance engraving bids fair to surpass the cutting of glass.

Members of the Hawkes family across the Atlantic had been identified with the glass industries in England for many years to that Thomas G. Hawkes seems to have come naturally into his life's work as a manufacturer of glass. Thomas Hakes of Dudley was one of the most prominent of the old Midland glass masters, for whom the claim is made says the Pottery Gazette, and English Trade journal, that he was the first to introduce deep cut glass into England. It was "Hawkes of Dudley" who built the three grad class chandeliers which attracted so much attention at the once famous Highbury barn dancing rooms. From the History of Glass Making in Staffordshire it is learned that in 1805 Thomas, George and Abiathar Hawkes were glass manufacturers; also that Abiathar was a candidate for Dudley to the House of Commons prior to the first election of 1832, but retired from the field. Thomas Hawkes was Member of Parliament for Dudley, February 1834 – July 1845, when he resigned. In explaining the retirement of the brothers from business life in the Gazette says: "T Hawkes, Dudley, worked three works in that town. His family have been absorbed in the aristocracy and trade now knows them not. Thomas was the last of the three brothers." The brothers Hawkes of Dudley were related to the ancestors of Thomas G. Hawkes of Corning. Their arms and crest were the same.

In 1903 Thomas Hawkes associated himself with Frederick Carder a glass designer of Stourbridge, Eng., in the establishment of the Steuben Glass Works in Corning. These works were among the earliest of their kind in this country. The company manufactured aurene glass, but later developed its line so as to also manufacture blanks for cutting, glass for electric shades, in direct lighting, etc., calcite glass etc. The firm at present employees about 200 men. Mr. Hakes was president of the company which has a large plant on West Eri Avenue, at the time of hid death, Mr. Carder being the managing director of the company.

In 1899 Mr. Hawkes, associated with Robert H. Canfield, of Corning, the inventor, and Jerome B. Maitby, formed a company which was incorporated as the Canfield Brake Company, for the manufacture of bicycle coaster brake. Later Mr. Hawkes bought the interest of Mr. Maltby in the company, and became its president. The company has changed its line of manufacture to automobile parts and the

manufacture of steel wheels used in glass cutting. Mr. Hawkes was president of the Canfield brake company at the time of his death.

In spite of his life of great activity as a manufacturer Mr. Hawkes found time to take an interest in the life of the community around him. As a young man he joined the Alliance Hook & Ladder Company, July 7, 1872. He was a life member of the company at the time of its disbandment in 1907. He served two years as the chief of the fire department in 1871-1873. The headquarters of the volunteer department were then located on West Market Street, one of the buildings in which one of the famous companies, Rough and Ready Hose was located being now a part of the Hawkes plant, through the building still bears the name Rough and Ready Hose.

Mr. Hawkes was for more than a score of years a vestryman at Christ church, and always took an active interest in all that pertained to its welfare. He was also a vestryman of Inniscarra church in County Cork, Ireland, near the extensive Irish estates. Mr. Hawkes was eminently a man of broad religious type. Large minded, tolerant of the faith of others, yet he believed that every man should be the possessor of a religious faith and that he should follow it assiduously.

Mr. Hawkes was a charter member of the Corning Club, and long served as its vice president. He was also a member of the Board of Managers. He long held membership in Painted Post Lodge 117, Free and Accepted Masons of Corning, but gave up his membership a number of years ago.

Mr. Hawkes in politics was a Republican and an active protectionist. He never sought nor accepted political preferment, and never took an active interest in politics except possibly to aid a friend. He was public spirited and patriotic and was possessed of a high sense of public duty. On occasions of patriotic nature he took pride in being present with the members of his family. Worthy public causes found in him a friend and a liberal supporter. He was one of the men who made an opera house for Corning possible by subscribing largely to its stock. In later life he did not go widely into society, but was usually to be found after business hours at his own fire-side. He was a man of literary tastes and read extensively. He had a scholarly mind which made him a companion of more than ordinary fascination.

He was genial and no man was more loyal to his friends. He was a close student of human nature, and frequently went out of his way to aid those in whom he discovered merit. He was known for his charitable acts. His workmen admired him for his fair dealing, his sense of justice and the kindly interest he took in them.

Love of birth-place and family for years resulted in Mr. Hawkes going to Ireland every second summer where he spent many months at his ancestral estates at Surmount, near Cork, where he saw much of his brothers and sisters. He was usually accompanied on his visits abroad by his family. In the early nineties he purchased Inniscarra House and land lying between Surmount and the estate of Sir George Colthurst of Blarney Castle in County Cork.

At his estates Mr. Hawkes entertained a great deal, and it was one of his great pleasures to invite to visit him there Cornish people traveling abroad whether or not he had enjoyed a previous close acquaintanceship with them.

The Hawkes family is an old one in Ireland. Thomas Hawkes of Essex of Saxon lineage, "In calling and profession a courtier, brought up daintily and like a gentleman," as a medieval history relates met death at the stake for his Protestant faith about the middle of the sixteenth century. One hundred years after this event, in 1726, John Hawkes, the settler, direct descendent from Thomas Hawkes, the martyr, left Worcester, England and invested largely in the lands of Ireland. He founded Monteen Castle in County Cork, a noted estate in later years. There he lived in affluence and comfort, one of the landed gentry. The settler had three sons John, Charles and William, and one daughter Katherine.

John Hawkes, eldest son of the settler, was born in Monteen Castle in 1727, and afterwards became the owner of large estates in County Cork, one being Surmount on which some of his descendants have ever since lived. He obtained additional prominence as a captain of the Supplementary Yeoman Corps, and organization admirably equipped and liberally supported yet serving without compensation. From this connection John Hawkes was dignified with the title of Captain. He too, lived in ease and affluence and was a man of education and dignified bearing. Captain John Hawkes was twice married; first to Abigail, daughter of Henry Prettie, Esq., and niece of Sir John Mead of the Town of Kinsale,

who bore him one daughter, Katherine, his second marriage was with Bridget, eldest daughter of Samuel Wakeley, alderman of the City of Cork. Four sons and five daughters were the issue of this marriage, among whom Samuel, father to Quayle Welsted Hawkes, was the fourth child.

Samuel Hawkes married Sally Penrose, fourth daughter of Samule and Mary Penrose of Waterford, County Cork, both representatives of families of position and influence among the gentry of Ireland. To Samuel and Sally Penrose Hawkes were born nine sons and two daughters, Quayle Welsted being the sixth son, and seventh child. Samuel Hawkes founded Hawkemount, another noted estate in County Cork, where his life was passed and where he reared his large and interesting family.

Quayle Welsted Hawkes, father of Thomas G. Hawkes of Corning, and at his death in 1908 owner of the Surmount was born in County Cork in 1813. He lived to be 93 years of age retaining his mental vigor and his physical faculties almost to the end. He married Jane Gibbons, as noted above. To them were born nine sons and four daughters of whom Thomas Gibbons Hawkes was the second son and third child. The sisters and brothers now surviving are: Sara Anne Hawkes, Mary Gibbons Hawkes and Elizabeth Lombard Hawkes, all of whom reside in Ireland; Devonshirer, John, Penrose, William and Richard Haweks, who live in Ireland and Henry Hawkes of Sound Beach, Conn., a building contractor in New York City.

Thomas G. Hawkes was last aboard to visit his Irish estates two years ago.

June 15, 1876, Thomas G. Hawkes was married in Corning to Charlotte Isadore, second daughter of the late Walter Bissell of Corning. They resided in the old Bissell residence at 28 Erie Avenue where one son Samuel Hawkes was born. The two daughters, Charlotte Jane and Alice Luella, were born while Mr. and Mrs. Hawkes lived at 62 East Fourth Street, the house now occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Willard S. Reed. About 25 years ago Mr. and Mrs. Hawkes moved into the residence on West Second street where they afterwards resided. Mrs. Hawkes died March 27 of the present year. The children survive and reside in this city. Townsend de M. Hawkes of Corning, secretary of T. G. Hawkes and Co., is a cousin of Thomas G. Hawkes.

Mr. Hawkes' death while no unexpected came nevertheless as a great shock to the members of his family and the community. He had been in ill health for nearly a year but his condition had rapidly failed since the death of his wife. His death was a very grievous blow to him. For the past month he had been seriously ill of diabetes and unable to be at his place of business. Of late, however, his condition had been reported as improving somewhat so that the news of his death came as a shock to many friends and acquaintances.

Mr. Hawkes was a kind friend to young men. He was a good adviser, and his advice was respected. His own early struggles had taught him that the kindly word and the helping hand opportunely given often made an impending failure a success. He made this idea a part of his theory of life, and through it accomplished much good in his life, and through it accomplished much good in his life without a brass band accompaniment.

Mr. Hawkes acquired a fortune in his various enterprises but more important he leaves behind him not only the record of a successful business career but also the record of a good and useful life well lived.

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