

## Robert O. Holtzman

(3 Feb 1848 – 13 Oct 1899)

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*The Evening Star, January 14, 1884*

### Locals

Mr. R.O. Holtzman had a tumor cut out of his wrist a week ago, and attempted to attend to his business matters as usual the next day, but he caught cold in the wound and has been confined to his bed with a badly inflamed arm ever since.

*The Evening Star, July 2, 1885*

### Locals

R.O. Holtzman has sold at auction house No. 718 10th street northwest for Reginald Fendau, trustee, to Chas. G. Thorn, for \$6,500.

*The Evening Star, July 28, 1885*

### Locals

Messrs. R.O. Holtzman and Thomas N. Vile have, for Gen. T.J. Brady, presented to Foreman Joseph Paris, of No. 1 engine company, a handsome billiard and pool table for the use of the company for which they return their thanks.

*The Evening Star, June 7, 1886, p. 4*

### Condensed Locals

Mr. R.O. Holtzman, who is agent for the Cook property, corner of K and 16th streets northwest, says the property has not been sold as stated.

*The Evening Star, May 25, 1889*

### R.O. Holtzman

Is a Washingtonian, and is as good an example of a self made man as can be found in the District. He was born on Bell street, Georgetown, February 3, 1848. Notwithstanding the fact that he is but a comparatively young man he has established one of the most extensive and successful real estate businesses in the city, an achievement due to an unusual amount of pluck, enterprise and good judgment. He commenced the business of life as a page in the House of Representatives at the age of ten, and since then he has been self-sustaining. At the commencement of the war he introduced the sale of newspapers into the Union army, and dispensed the first periodicals to the troops after they had crossed the Potomac. The grit and push of the little fellow won him extended notice and praise, and after McClellan's Peninsular campaign he obtained the exclusive privilege of supplying the Army of the Potomac with reading mater and stationery. He had here an opportunity to make a fortune, but through the designs of his partner, an elderly man, he lost it. The other made over \$100,000. When the war closed he held a special sutler's privilege at the headquarters of Gen. Hancock, and after the smoke had cleared away and peace had come again he obtained a clerkship in the Post Office department. In a short while he was given a position in the New York custom-house, but realizing that there was but a poor future before a government clerk he managed to find a situation in a wholesale hardware house in St. Louis. Four years passed and Mr. Holtzman's eyes were opened to the wonderful advantages of his

native city in the line of real estate business, and he returned to embark in that business with F.W. Miller & Co., then located on F street, between 9th and 10th, in the old Gonzago college building, where he had gone to school in his boyhood. The firm last two years and a half, and then Mr. Holtzman launched a canoe of his own. Prosperity came in course of time, and in 1880 he erected the building he now occupies on the northeast corner of F and 10th streets, where he holds the reins of his large establishment. Mr. Holtzman is a trustee and the secretary of the St. Vincent's orphan asylum, trustee of the Real Estate title insurance company, trustee of the Columbia fire insurance company, trustee of the National life insurance company, director of the National press brick company, and a director of the Southeastern natural gas company of the state of Ohio.

Personally Mr. Holtzman is a pleasant, genial man, and he owes almost as much of the credit for his success to this fact as to that he is a firm believer in the efficacy of printer's ink in business. He is a judicious, practical advertiser, and, knowing a good thing when he sees it, he takes advantage of the medium of The Star to lay his stock before the public for inspection.

*The Evening Star, January 9, 1892*

### **Twenty-One Men**

#### **Those Who Comprise the Executive Inauguration Committee Well-Known Citizens**

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The active energy of Mr. R.O. Holtzman will be found to be a valuable aid to the committee in perfecting the details of the inaugural arrangements. Mr. Holtzman has been a hustler for a good many years, and while now he has established a large and lucrative real estate business, there is not the same necessity as existed when he started out in business a poor boy, still he is by nature a striving, pushing man, and he therefore puts a good deal of "go" in whatever he undertakes. He has a wide acquaintance in the city and among public men, and he has the confidence and esteem of all who know him.

**Holtzman.** On Friday, October 13, 1899 at his residence, Robert B. Holtzman in the 54th year of his age. Funeral from St. Patrick's Church, Monday at 10 o'clock. Kindly omit flowers.

*The Evening Star, October 12, 1899, p. 2*

### **Grave Illness**

#### **Mr. Robert O. Holtzman a Sufferer From Bright's Disease**

Mr. Robert O. Holtzman, the well-known dealer in real estate, is dangerously ill of Bright's disease at his residence, 905 10th street northwest. Mr. Holtzman has not been a well man since July 3, but up to Saturday last has attended to his business and to social duties with his characteristic energy. Sunday evening he complained of excessive weakness and retired at 9 o'clock, since which time he has been confined to his bed. Yesterday his condition was critical in the extreme, but this morning he rallied somewhat and his physicians were much encouraged by the change. It is feared, however, by the members of Mr. Holtzman's household that he will not survive the attack.

*The Evening Star, October 13, 1899, p. 2*

### **Mr. Holtzman Dead**

#### **Well-Known Citizen Passed Away This Afternoon**

Mr. R.O. Holtzman, one of the best-known local citizens died at 3:15 this afternoon at his home on 10th street after an illness of several weeks. The cause of death was Bright's disease.

*The Evening Star, October 14, 1899, p. 12*

### **Holtzman Funeral**

### **Services Monday Morning Next at St. Patrick's Church**

### **The Close of an Active Career**

### **Business Man of Integrity and Good Judgment**

### **His Early Experiences**

Funeral services over the remains of Robert O. Holtzman will be held Monday morning at 10 o'clock at St. Patrick's Catholic Church, on 10th street near F. The honorary pallbearers will be Charles C. Glover, Edward J. Stellwagen, Mihlon Asford, Wm. Galt, Wm. T. Quicksall, John S. Larcombe, Wm. B. Gurley, J.J. Darlington, ex-Senator A.P. Gorman, ex-Commissioner of Pensions, D.I. Murphy; active pallbearers, Upton H. Ridenour, jr.; William S. McCarthy, John O'Hagan, Howard Galt, John D. Kinney, Edward T. Keiser, Wallace McLean, Wm. Musser. The funeral will be private.

As stated in yesterday's Star, Mr. Holtzman died yesterday afternoon shortly after 3 o'clock. The end was not unexpected, as it had been recognized for several days that he was in a critical condition. He suffered from Bright's disease, and while he had been confined to his bed only since last Sunday, he failed rapidly in strength. The news of his death was received with genuine regret by his many friends and acquaintances in this city.

Mr. Holtzman was not only personally popular, but he had the confidence and esteem of all who knew him. He had a high ideal of business honor, and in all his transactions as a real estate man he carried out these principles, so that his reputation for integrity and fair dealing was deservedly high. He was a man of excellent judgment in business matters, conservative and careful, so that some of the largest investors in the city relied very largely on his advice in making investments. He built up one of the largest real estate brokerage businesses in this city and some most important transactions were conducted by him.

He had such a bright and cheerful manner that few of his friends outside of his family circle were aware, even in the last months of his life, of his critical condition. He had said at times that he was not feeling very well, and this summer he spent the entire month of August at Asbury Park with his wife and sister, Mrs. Byron S. Adams, and the latter's husband. He went about the city much as usual upon his return, and it was not until increasing weakness compelled him to give up that it became generally known that he was really a sick man. It will be recalled, as a sad circumstance connected with the death of Mr. Holtzman, that only a short time ago his aged father, who made his home with him, passed away, and several weeks afterward his brother died. His wife and his sister, Mrs. Byron S. Adams, survive him.

### **Native of District**

Mr. Holtzman's life was intimately identified with the growth and development of the city. He was born in Georgetown about fifty-five years ago. At an early age he became a bread winner, and when a small boy he served as a page at the Capitol, where, among his associates, was Arthur P. Gorman, who subsequently became a member of the Senate, where he had served as a page. The friendship which then began with Mr. Gorman continued to the day of Mr. Holtzman's death. He was only a lad at the outbreak of the civil war, but in spite of that fact he desired to enter the service of his country, and, unable to enlist, he followed the Union army into Virginia. When he presented himself at the headquarters of Gen. Hancock the latter, appreciating the spirit of the boy, gave him a clerical position with the army, which he held until the close of the war. In later years Mr. Holtzman supported Gen.

Hancock when he was a candidate for the presidency, and locally he was recognized as one of the prominent men in the democratic party.

After the war, Mr. Holtzman spent some time in New York city, where he had a position in the custom house but desiring to fit himself for a business career he went to St. Louis, where he entered a hardware store. In the year 1875 he returned to this city, where he formed a partnership with Frank W. Miller and engaged in the real estate business. The latter retired from the firm, on account of ill health, in the course of a couple of years, and then Mr. Holtzman began the career which finally resulted in establishing one of the largest and most successful offices of the kind in the city. For nearly a quarter of a century Mr. Holtzman was engaged in handling real estate and in making loans, and in that time he was in charge of some of the largest transactions that came into the market, and his ability and good judgment brought to him an unusual degree of success. It is stated that the business which he founded will be continued without interruption.

#### *His Many Interests*

In addition to the attention which he gave to his business, Mr. Holtzman was interested in a number of financial and other institutions in this city, but of recent years he was gradually withdrawn from many of them. At the time of his death he was a director of the National Safe Deposit and Trust Company; the Columbia Fire Insurance Company, and the Real Estate Title Insurance Company. He was also a director of St. Vincent's Orphan Asylum, and was instrumental in the recent sale of that property, and was acting in an advisory way in regard to the new home which it is proposed to build.

He was a member of St. Patrick's Church and its business representative in the handling of the large property interests of the parish, which comprises the main portion of the block on which the church edifice is located.

*The Evening Star, October 16, 1899, p. 11*

#### **Eloquent Tribute**

#### **Funeral of the Late Robert O. Holtzman This Morning**

#### **Requiem Mass at St. Patrick's**

#### **Representative Gathering Attends the Last Sad Services**

#### **Dr. Stafford's Sermon**

Solemn requiem mass was celebrated in St. Patrick's Church this morning over the body of the late Robert O. Holtzman, and the congregation that gathered to pay the last tribute of respect to one who had held such high place in the esteem of the community was representative of that community in the very best sense of the term. Every branch of business sent some of its most prominent men to the services, while the learned professions and official and social Washington were equally in evidence.

The orphans were there. The unfortunate waifs had never known a truer or kinder friend than Mr. Holtzman, so the little girls from St. Vincent's and the little boys from St. Joseph's were in attendance, and evidence that they understood they had suffered a loss.

#### *Services at the Church*

The celebrant of the mass was Rev. Father John Gloyd, pastor, with Rev. Dr. D.J. Stafford as deacon and Rev. Father Dolan as subdeacon. Monsignor Stephan and Rev. Father W.S. Caughy of St. Stephen's Church occupied seats within the sanctuary. Schmidt's requiem mass was sung by a choir consisting of Mrs. Blanche Mattingly Rogers, soprano; Mrs. Maina, contralto; Mr. W.D. McFarland, tenor; Mr. B.A. Ryan, bass; Mr. Gomprecht, organist and Mr. Maina, director. There was an excellent chorus as well.

The flower-covered casket containing the remains were met at the church door by a procession of acolytes, bearing candles and burning incense, and by the celebrant and assistants, and was borne down

the aisle by the active pallbearers, who were Messrs. Wallace McLean, Howard Galt, E.T. Kaiser, William Musser, John D. Kinney, Upton H. Ridenour, jr., William S. McCarthy and John O'Hagan.

Following came the honorary pallbearers, who were Messrs. Charles C. Glover, Edward J. Stellwagen, John S. Larcombe, J.J. Darlington, Mahlon Ashford, William T. Quicksall, William Galt, Arthur P. Gorman, William B. Gurley, S.W. Woodward and Dominick I. Hurphy.

### *An Affecting Tribute*

At the conclusion of the mass, Dr. Stafford paid an eloquent and feeling tribute to the dead man. When a man had lived a life of many years in a single community, and been untouched by reproach or criticism, he said, it was proof positive that he possessed a great character and the grace of God. To make a great character required three elements--generosity, high ideals and strength, coexisting and cooperating. Generosity was the chief requisite. The man who lived simply for himself was of no good to the community. If he possessed the whole world and still was selfish, he would still be a useless entity. To be generous was for a man to be charitable not only to those about him, but to have a heart from which none should be excluded by reason of race, creed, belief, or anything else.

Without having high ideals, said Dr. Stafford, which meant that one must give up all things for the right, even generosity and charity would be weak, and strength meant to resist temptation, to strive for success only by honest means.

### *Washington Business Men*

"I thank God there are many men in this community who possess what I term a great character," he exclaimed. "Indeed, Washington is remarkable for the great character of the men in its business life, both in the Catholic Church and out of it. They are benefits to the community in themselves and in the splendid examples they set for the young men."

Mr. Holtzman, he said with much feeling, was one of these. He was a generous man. He was good to the poor. He was good to the widow. He was good to the orphan. By honest effort and undeviating loyalty to high ideals he had reached the front rank among his fellow citizens. No man stood higher. No man had the confidence of the business community to a greater degree. He possessed the remarkable faculty, too, of combining charity with his business. He ever had kindly consideration for the unfortunate. Everybody loved him. Nothing could have tempted him from his high standard of morality.

He was a splendid citizen and a zealous, practical, consistent and devout Catholic. Intrusted time and again with immense sums of money for investment, he regarded their custody as a sacred responsibility.

"He is a loss to this community," said Dr. Stafford in conclusion; "a loss to his friends; a loss to his devoted wife; a loss to his sister and his relatives; an unspeakable loss to the priests of this parish, and to the orphan and the poor. His character was above reproach, his name without a stain."

The effect of Dr. Stafford's words was plainly visible in all parts of the church. When he had concluded the choir sang the quartet, "E Jesu," and when the casket was being removed from the church Mrs. Maina rendered "Nearer, My God, to Thee."

The interment, which was private, was made in Congressional cemetery.