

## Catherine Hughes

(b.1824, d.1905)

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When Catherine Hughes was recorded as an inmate in the Leeds Union Workhouse on the 1881 census, she had already been in the care of the Leeds Union for at least thirty years and was destined to continue this for another 25 years.

Catherine Hughes was born on October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1824, and was baptised at Leeds Parish Church on April 14<sup>th</sup> 1833, at the same time as her younger brother George Edward who had been born on July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1826 **(1)**. Their parents were Richard Hughes and Sarah Child, who were married at Leeds Parish Church on December 15<sup>th</sup>, 1821 **(2)**, and who also had an older child, Richard. Catherine's father was described as a 'flax draper', and they lived in Meadow Lane in south Leeds.

When Catherine was sixteen years old her mother died of pneumonia on February 6<sup>th</sup>, 1840 **(3)**. She was aged 36 and was buried in St Mary the Virgin churchyard, Hunslet, on February 9<sup>th</sup>.

A year later when the 1841 census was taken, Catherine, her father Richard, a flax dresser, and her brothers Richard, a mechanic, and George were living at 2, Micklethwaites Yard, off Meadow Lane **(4)**. Catherine's father had been born in Ireland and was aged about 60 making him 20 years older than her late mother, Sarah. (In the 1834 General & Commercial Directory of Leeds he was listed as a flax dresser and waste dealer.)

Catherine's father died 5 years later **(5)**. He was aged 66 and was buried in Woodhouse Cemetery (Leeds General Cemetery) on October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1846, the cause of death being given as 'decay' **(6)**. Interestingly Richard's death is listed in the records of the 'UK Royal Hospital Chelsea Returns of Payment and other Pensions' and it seems that he had been paid some sort of pension. He had served in the 26<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot and was discharged on July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1802, when he was 22 years old.

Shortly after her father's death Catherine became pregnant and in 1847 applied to the Union for some help **(7)**. At the time she was described as 'dirty and tawdry' and was destitute. Her illegitimate child, a son she named Richard, was born in the workhouse on August 24<sup>th</sup>, but sadly died there of 'atrophy' a month later **(8)**.

In the 1851 census Catherine was listed as a pauper inmate in the Leeds Workhouse **(9)**. This would have been the old workhouse, called the North Street or Lady Lane Workhouse. At the time this workhouse had become very overcrowded, with cramped and insanitary living conditions partly due to the influx of Irish people fleeing the Great Famine. The Leeds Guardians agreed to erect a new workhouse in Beckett Street, which was opened in March 1861. The 1851 census described Catherine as 'deformed' and with no occupation.

Ten years later, in 1861, Catherine remained an inmate in the workhouse, but she had now been moved to the new workhouse in Beckett Street which housed 438 inmates **(10)**. She was stated to be aged 42 but was actually about 37. Her occupation was given as a 'housekeeper', which probably meant that she did domestic work within the workhouse.

In 1860 the House of Commons ordered that a list be made of every adult pauper who had been an inmate in the workhouse for a continuous period of five years. Catherine was included in the list compiled for the Leeds Union Workhouse and it stated that she had been there for fifteen years and was unable to maintain herself because of a 'deformity' **(11)**.

In 1871 Catherine was still a 'pauper inmate' in the workhouse and was now described as a 'domestic servant', again, work she would have done in the workhouse. Her age again was incorrect

as she would have been 46, not 51 **(12)**. Catherine was also included in a list made of inmates in the workhouse compiled in 1871 and was said to be 'lame' and 'unable to work' and was also 'teetotal' **(13)**.

Four years later Catherine, now called 'Kate', was mentioned in the Leeds Union Workhouse medical Relief book when she was said to be suffering from dyspepsia and was 'poorly', having been admitted to the sick ward. She remained there for just over a week by which time she was said to have recovered **(14)**.

By 1881**(15)** Catherine had been admitted to the Union Infirmary and it seems that she remained in the infirmary for the next twenty years, being recorded there on the 1891 **(16)** and 1901 census **(17)**. She continued to work as a 'domestic servant' within the workhouse.

Catherine lived to the age of 83 and died in the Union Infirmary on December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1905, the cause of death being 'morbus cordis anasarca' **(18)**, **(19)**. Catherine (Kate) was buried in the unconsecrated section of Beckett Street Cemetery on December 6<sup>th</sup> **(20)**. Her grave number was 23848 and she shared it with four other adults and four children **(21)**.

#### Reference list:

- (1) 'Catherine Hughes' (1833) West Yorkshire Births and Baptisms; Available at <http://www.ancestry.co.uk>
- (2) 'Richard Hughes' (1821) Marriage of Richard Hughes and Sarah Child 15 December 1821 Leeds Parish Church. West Yorkshire Marriages and Banns. Available at <http://www.ancestry.co.uk>
- (3) 'Sarah Hughes' (1840), Burial of Sarah Hughes West Yorkshire, England, Church of England Deaths and Burials, 1813-1985. Available at <http://www.ancestry.co.uk>
- (4) 'Catherine Hughes' (1841), Census Return for Micklethwaite Yard, Kirkgate, Leeds, Yorkshire. HO107/1348, folio 46, p.23 (1841). Available at <http://www.ancestry.co.uk>
- (5) 'Richard Hughes' (1846) Certified entry recording death on the Civil Registration Death Index 1837-1915. Available at <http://www.ancestry.co.uk>
- (6) 'Richard Hughes' (1846) Burial of Richard Hughes 25 October 1846, Leeds General Cemetery. Find a grave.com. Available at <http://www.ancestry.co.uk>
- (7) 'Catherine Hughes' (1847), Relief Order Books: Admission and Discharge Book, Schedule C Form 15, Leeds Records, Poor Law 1843-1847, PL5/1A, record 78 (1847). Available at West Yorkshire Archives.
- (8) 'Richard Hughes' (1847) Certified entry recording death on the Civil Registration Death index, Leeds. Volume 23 Page 300. Available at <http://www.ancestry.co.uk>
- (9) 'Catherine Hughes' (1851), Census Return for North Street Workhouse, Leeds, Leeds, Yorkshire. HO107/2320, folio 214, p.27 (1851). Available at <http://www.ancestry.co.uk>
- (10) 'Catherine Hughes' (1861), Census Return for Leeds Workhouse, North Leeds, Leeds, Yorkshire. RG9/3386, folio 90, p.8 (1861). Available at <http://www.ancestry.co.uk>
- (11) 'Catherine Hughes' (1861) List of Workhouse long term inmates). Available at <http://www.ancestry.co.uk>
- (12) 'Catherine Hughes' (1871), Census Return for Leeds Workhouse, North Leeds, Leeds, Yorkshire. RG10/4558 Folio 108, p.10 (1871). Available at <http://www.ancestry.co.uk>
- (13) 'Catherine Hughes' (1871) Leeds Union Workhouse Inmate List May 1871.
- (14) 'Kate/Catherine Hughes' (1875) Leeds Union Workhouse, Workhouse Medical Relief Book 1875.,

Weeks starting 11 & 18 April 1875. Available at [West Yorkshire Archive Service](#).

(15) 'Catherine Hughes' (1881), Census Return for Leeds Union Workhouse, North Leeds subdistrict, Leeds, Yorkshire. RG11/4524, folio 101, p.7 (1881). Available at <http://www.ancestry.co.uk>

(16) 'Catherine Hughes' (1891), Census Return for Leeds Union Workhouse, North Leeds subdistrict, Leeds, Yorkshire. Public Record Office: PRO RG12/3696, folio 120, p.11 (1891). Available at <http://www.ancestry.co.uk> (Accessed 7 November 2019)

(17) 'Catherine Hughes' (1901) Census Return for Leeds Union Workhouse, North Leeds subdistrict, Leeds, Yorkshire. RG13/4227, folio 97, p.2 (1901). Available at <http://www.ancestry.co.uk>

(18) 'Kate Hughes' (1905), Certified entry recording death on the Civil Registration Death Index 1837-1915. Available at <http://www.ancestry.co.uk>

(19) 'Kate Hughes' (1905), Leeds Union Infirmary, Register of Deaths, West Yorkshire Archive Service: Reference: WYL2596/1/2

(20) 'Kate Hughes' (1905), Burial of Kate/Catherine Hughes. Beckett Street Cemetery Records, Available at <http://www.ancestry.co.uk>

(21) 'Kate Hughes' (1905) Burial of Kate Hughes. Available at [Yorkshireburials.uk](http://Yorkshireburials.uk)