

# **Francis Sanford Babbitt**

**Born: December 22, 1843, Taunton, Mass.**

**Died: August 22, 1917, Taunton, Mass.**

FRANCIS S. BABBITT carries an honored name in the Old Colony, for his ancestors were among the very first who dared the perils of the primeval wilderness. All through the two and a half centuries, since the incorporation of Taunton as a town, the name of Babbitt appears in connection with various positions of trust. The same thing is noticeable in the various towns which were cut out of the original purchase and made into separate municipalities. The Babbitt stock has been sturdy and vigorous, and has not been eliminated by emigration, which has wiped out so many of the old names from the town and city records. Mr. Babbitt was born in Taunton on Dec. 22, 1843. He was educated in the public schools of the town, at Bristol Academy and at Comer's Commercial School, Boston. In the spring of 1862, when the retreat of Banks's division caused a demand for more volunteers to recruit the Union Army, he enlisted in Company F, Fourth Regiment, Massachusetts Militia, for one month, but was discharged after three days' service in Boston, as the government decided that it did not need the new men. In August of the same year he enlisted in Company F, Thirty-ninth Massachusetts Volunteers, for three years' service. He served one year with the regiment, and was then detailed for service in the United States Signal Corps. For nearly two years he was busily engaged in that branch of military duty, being discharged on June 28, 1865, by reason of the close of the war. Returning to his old home he began the manufacture of machinery in the fall of 1865, and kept busily engaged in that business until 1890. He was chosen a member of the Massachusetts House of Representatives in 1882 and in 1883, and served on important committees of that body. In 1887 he was a member of the Board of Aldermen of Taunton, and in the fall of the same year was elected one of the three commissioners of Bristol County. He was re-elected in 1890. He was made chairman of the board when he took his seat in 1888, and is still serving in that capacity. In 1890 he was elected mayor of Taunton, and re-elected in 1891 and 1892. Mr. Babbitt has been a very efficient and faithful public officer. During his service as county commissioner, large expenditures have been necessary to fill the needs of the rapidly growing county, among them the splendid new court houses of Taunton and Fall River, the house of correction at New Bedford, bridges, etc., all requiring a vast amount of supervision and detail work from those charged with the care of the county business. Such, also, has been the case of the city during his administration. A constant growth in population, the call for improvements, and the necessity for providing for the wants of a rapidly growing municipality have made large expenditures and great care necessary. Mr. Babbitt has shown his sagacity on all trying occasions, and his repeated election to the management of municipal matters

proves the estimation of his fellow-citizens, who have full confidence in his judgment.

Babbitt, Francis Sanford, a son of George H. and Seraphene S. Babbitt, was born in Taunton, December 22, 1843. He was educated in Taunton public schools and Bristol Academy, and at the age of nineteen he enlisted in the 39th Reg., M. V. M., and served from that time (1862) until the close of the war in 1865. On his return from the war he engaged in the manufacture of machinery in Taunton, and continued in this business until 1890. He was a representative in the Legislature in 1882 and 1883; on the Board of Aldermen in 1887; and county commissioner from 1887 to 1893 inclusive. In the fall of 1890 he was elected mayor of the city of Taunton, and served the city in this capacity in the years 1891, 1892, and 1893; was appointed chief of police of the city in 1897, which position he now holds. Mr. Babbitt was married to Abbie L. Hitch, of New Bradford, in 1870, and she died in 1892, leaving one daughter. A. Louise Babbitt.