

**A MEMORIAL OF JAMES
BARNARD BLAKE,
LATE MAYOR OF THE CITY
OF WORCESTER, MASS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649266760

A Memorial of James Barnard Blake, Late Mayor of the City of Worcester, Mass by Various

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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VARIOUS

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OF

—JAMES BARNARD BLAKE,

LATE MAYOR OF THE

CITY OF WORCESTER, MASS.

D. WORCESTER:
SNOW BROTHERS.
1871

~~14226.92~~

US 13569.6

28 January, 1892.

Giff

Wm. S. Rogers

Worcester.

PRINTED BY SNOW BROTHERS,
22 MAIN ST., WORCESTER, MASS.

NO attempt has been made in preparing this publication to gather minute details of the early life of Mayor Blake. The design is to present in a permanent form, a Memorial of one commencing life with none but the most ordinary advantages, and through his own energy and faithfulness, winning the applause and admiration of his fellowmen.



BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

JAMES BARNARD BLAKE was the son of Mr. James Blake, and was born in Boston on the 19th day of June, 1827. His boyhood was spent in that city, where he attended the public schools, and later the Chauncy Hall private school. At school he exhibited a fondness for the exact sciences, and pursued their study with an eagerness which might have foreshadowed the energy and success of his manhood.

When eighteen years old he began the study of engineering with Messrs. Blake & Darracott, of Boston, the contractors for the first gas works in Worcester, in whose office he remained six years. He came to Worcester in their service, and in January 1852, was appointed Agent of the Worcester Gas Light Company, and Superintendent of their works, which position he held till the time of his death. The improvements from time to time introduced, and the present effective condition of the works—having been planned and brought about under his personal supervision—are evidences of his mature judgment and remarkable executive ability.

As an indication of the esteem in which he was held by his fellow citizens, Mr. Blake received from time to time honorable positions of responsibility, having held for a period of years at the time of his death the position of

Trustee of the Worcester Five Cents Savings Bank, and Director of the City National Bank.

Mr. Blake was first elected Mayor of Worcester in December, 1865, and entered upon the discharge of the duties of that office in January, 1866. His services as chief magistrate of the city were so valuable and acceptable to the people, that he was re-elected, by large majorities, for five succeeding years.

It was in that office that he won the high honors which crowned the close of his life. He commenced his official career in the faith that there was a glorious future in store for Worcester. With great sagacity of judgment in his outlook, and remarkable tact in overcoming opposition from those in favor of a more conservative style of administering the affairs of the city, he bent the whole energy of his nature to the work of establishing such improvements as he foresaw would be indispensable, not only to promote the growth of the city, but to secure the health and comfort of the inhabitants when it should have largely increased in population.

While it is not just to other faithful public servants to attribute to Mayor Blake the entire credit of planning and carrying out the improvements which distinguished his administration, yet it is true that he brought to every important work undertaken in either of the departments of the city government, not only wise counsel, but a zeal and devotion in execution well-nigh *indispensable* to success. Measures for supplying the city with water, important improvements in some of the streets, the admirable system of sewerage, and the public schools—the pride of the city

—all bear testimony to his earnest, unwearied devotion to the public good.

He took an active part in the establishment of the Worcester Horse Railroad. He was also deeply interested in the success of the Worcester County Free Institute of Industrial Science, being, *ex-officio*, one of its trustees.

The spirit in which he undertook every duty cannot be better stated than in the following extract from his address at the inauguration of the city government, January 2nd, 1870:

* * * * *

“We have each taken the solemn oaths of our respective positions; it is for us to assume the responsibility and to direct the management of these large and varied public interests to the best of our ability. Let us therefore trustingly enter upon these high duties with purity of motive, and singleness of purpose, with a determination to be faithful to every demand; frankly and openly meeting every question, and honestly deciding upon the merits of each case in the broad sunlight of earnest endeavor to do right, irrespective of all party lines or personal preference; with the sole aim of proving ourselves worthy the high trusts committed to our care as faithful servants of this people; that as the eastern horizon of the present is made glorious with its beaming rays of opportunity, so may the sunset hour of the future, by the refractive influences of faithful duty, greet us with its gorgeous panoply of prismatic light; and that upon the records of the passing time, nothing shall have been transcribed which shall cause feelings of personal regret, or reflect upon our motives of action or honesty of pur-