

son James to Chickasaw county and made their home with him and their other son, Dr. Amos Babcock, throughout their remaining days, Dr. Babcock having become a resident of New Hampton a month or so after the arrival of his brother, James F. The father died at the venerable age of eighty years, while the mother reached the age of seventy-eight years. James F. Babcock supplemented his common school education by study in the Western Reserve Teachers' Seminary at Kirtland, Ohio, where he continued his attendance for several years and taught in the seminary, thereby helping to pay his tuition. Later he became a teacher in the schools of Winnebago county, Illinois, where he worked during the summer season at the trade of brick and stone mason and also followed plastering. His parents joined him while he was still a resident of Illinois. He first came to Iowa in 1854 and purchased a farm in Fayette county. He made several trips from Illinois to this state to look after his farming interests during the succeeding four years and in 1858 he took his parents to his Fayette county farm, whereon he resided for ten years, carefully continuing its cultivation and further development and improvement. During four years of that decade he also served as sheriff of Fayette county and filled the office of town clerk for several years, while for a time he was likewise justice of the peace.

In 1868 Mr. Babcock removed to New Hampton, where he continued to work at the trade of brick and stone mason for a number of years and erected the first brick business block in New Hampton. Later he built two other brick business blocks in the city, laying practically every brick himself. After coming to New Hampton he opened the first drug store of the town and conducted the business for ten years. The store is still in existence, being now owned by Olmstead & Gardner, who still occupy the original brick building which Mr. Babcock erected and which was the first in New Hampton. In 1877 he purchased his first farm land in Chickasaw county, investing in three hundred and fifty-two acres adjoining the town, a portion of which now lies within the corporation limits of the present city. He resided upon the farm for ten or twelve years and actively cultivated the place during that period but has recently transferred the ownership to his son, James F. Babcock, Jr. Early in the '80s he introduced Holstein cattle into Chickasaw county, paying what was thought at that time to be an exorbitant price—one hundred dollars for a suckling calf. In later years he considered this the best investment that he ever made. In subsequent years he engaged extensively in the breeding of registered Holstein cattle and also conducted a large dairy business. His place was registered as the Holstein Farm, by which name it is still known. His efforts constituted a most important element in improving the grade of cattle raised in this section of the state and thereby contributed in marked measure to the prosperity of the region. Mr. Babcock was also one of the leading factors in the organization of the State Bank of New Hampton and has been one of the principal stockholders and a member of the board of directors since its establishment. Following the organization of the Farmers' Mutual Insurance Company of Chickasaw county he was elected to its presidency and served in that important capacity for twenty-one years. Thus his business activities have covered a broad scope and have ever been of a character that has contributed to general progress and prosperity as well as to individual success. In business affairs he displays notably sound judgment and has readily discriminated between the essential and the non-essential, quickly eliminating the latter and utilizing the former to the fullest extent. Moreover, the integrity of his business methods has been one of the elements of his success. His name has ever stood as a synonym for honorable endeavor and he has ever held a good name above riches.

It is but natural that a man of Mr. Babcock's capabilities and powers should be called upon for public service, and in addition to his office holding in Fayette county he has been chosen for political honors in Chickasaw county. He was the first mayor of the city of New Hampton, following its incorporation, and he has repeatedly served as a member of the town council and for one term as chairman of the board of county supervisors. In 1882 he was elected to represent Chickasaw county in the state legislature and in the discharge of his official duties he has