James Francis O'Brien was born on January 5, 1878, in Fall River, Mass.\(^1\) His parents, Edward and Mary (Doyle) O’Brien, were born in Ireland and came to the United States as children.\(^2\) His father was employed as an overseer in the textile mills of Fall River.\(^3\) He had at least two sisters and two brothers.\(^4\) He attended both the Fall River public schools and the parish school of Sacred Heart Church in Fall River.\(^5\)

In 1895, at the age of 17, James F. O’Brien enlisted in the Navy, serving during the Spanish-American War and the Philippine Insurrection.\(^6\) When he was honorably discharged from the Navy, he enrolled at Rogers and Allen Business College.\(^7\) Prior to enrolling at Suffolk Law School in 1906, Gleason Archer writes that O’Brien had tried to enroll at several other law schools, but was turned away.\(^8\) Archer decided to give him a chance, and although O’Brien was almost forced to drop out, he ultimately graduated in 1909 as one of five members of the school’s first graduating class.\(^9\) He was able to finance his education by working at Suffolk Law School as a janitor, in Gleason Archer’s office and at a restaurant.\(^10\) After passing the bar in 1911, he opened law offices in Fall River and New Bedford, Mass.\(^11\)

In April of 1917, James F. O’Brien voluntarily enlisted in the Navy upon the United States’ entry into World War I.\(^12\) He served in a variety of posts, including gunnery instructor, battalion commander and lieutenant, before being honorably discharged in September of 1919.\(^13\) In 1922, he ran unsuccessfully as a Democratic candidate for Bristol County district attorney.\(^14\) He served as judge advocate of the Spanish American War Veterans and was a member of many other veterans and fraternal organizations, including the United Spanish War Veterans, American Legion and the Fraternal Order of Eagles.\(^15\)

---

2. Hutt, Frank Walcott, Ibid.
3. Hutt, Frank Walcott, Ibid.
10. Archer, Gleason L., Ibid.
On July 7, 1923, James F. O’Brien suffered a stroke from which he never fully recovered.\textsuperscript{16} He died in 1925 at the age of 47, survived by his wife, Elizabeth V. O’Brien, four daughters and two sons, as well as two sisters, two brothers, and his mother.\textsuperscript{17}

Copyright Information: Copyright ©2006 by the Suffolk University Archives, Suffolk University.

\textsuperscript{16} Obituary, \textit{Fall River Globe}, Ibid.
\textsuperscript{17} Obituary, \textit{Fall River Globe}, Ibid.