

Biography of Ernest LeNeve Foster

Created for *History of the 2100 Block of Lafayette Street, 1987*

Ernest LeNeve Foster was born in London, England on January 23, 1849. He was educated as a mining engineer at the Royal School of Mines in London, graduating in 1868. In 1868-9 he attended the King's and Emperor's Mining Academy in Freiberg, Germany. In the latter part of 1869, Foster went to Italy, and worked as an assistant in gold mines in the Alps, returning to England in 1871.

He came to the United States in 1872 as the Superintendent of the Snow Drift Silver Mining and Reduction Company, arriving on January 24. He continued there and also had charge of other mines in the Georgetown District, several of which he developed. He was the manager of the Colorado Central Mine for five years and developed mines in Summit County near Rathbone. In 1893 he became superintendent of the Saratoga Mine, which was 900 feet deep and one of the biggest producers in the region.

He married Charlotte Teal, also a native of England, in 1875 in Central City. They had one child, Oscar LeNeve Foster, who was a graduate of Jarvis Hall in Denver, and the Princeton University Class of 1902. He lived in Silver Plume until the spring of 1877. He moved to Georgetown in 1877 after a trip to England, and in 1893 to 2105 Lafayette Street, Denver. While living in Denver, he dealt extensively with his neighbor Willaim Chamberlain, who operated a sampling works in Georgetown.

He was an active member of the Masonic Temple beginning while in Georgetown and continuing in Denver through the rest of his life. Foster appears to have survived the Panic of 1893 quite well, even though he made his fortune in mining. He became the State Geologist and lived at 2105 Lafayette until his wife died on November 20, 1906. In 1907 he moved to the Perrenaud Apartments. He remained a prominent member of Denver Society until his death on September 21, 1925. His correspondance in the Foster Box at the Western History Collection provides remarkable insight to the effect of the crash of 1893 on the economy of Colorado and mining in general. In one letter he suggested that if legislative relief were not forthcoming they might as well give the state back to the Indians. Foster died while visiting a beneficiary of the Masonic Benevolent Fund, a fund which he had founded. In 1901 he became a thirty third degree mason, and was a charter member of the Sons of Colorado.

Foster owned other property that we have not investigated. There is a property transaction on July 1, 1907, conveying a lot of property from LeNeve Foster to Home Guanantee Company for one dollar and valuable considerations (apparaently a way of concealing the true sale price). There is a quit claim deed transferring more property from Oscar, Ernest as sole heirs to Charlotte on 2 July 1907 to Home Guarantee Company for a dollar. There is a warrenty deed from Ernest Foster to Ralph Madison on July 1, 1907 for 2105 for the sum of one dollar. I thought we had one from Madison to Home Guarantee Co but cant find it. Madison didnt last long in the directories. He was an agent for

the Home Guarantee Company. On March 6, 1913, there is a sheriff's certificate of purchase for 2105 Lafayette listing Frederick W Standart, Edward R. Conaway, Lewis C Greenlee and the trustees of Delta Lodge of Perfection No 1 Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite as plaintiffs and the Home Guarantee Company a corporation and Ralph Madison as defendants. The plaintiffs bid \$6725.47 and received title unless redeemed by December 6, 1913.

Robert Newnam looked for information in Masonic Temple records in 1984 before the fire. He reported that Mr. Foster joined Georgetown Chapter Four of the Royal Arch Masons on September 18, 1875. By 1876, he had become the secretary of that chapter and by 1882 he had become a high priest (presiding officer). After his year as high priest, he continued as secretary until 1892 when he transferred to Denver.

He "demitted" to Colorado Chapter 29 of the Royal Arch Masons on September 21, 1893, and then subsequently transferred to South Denver Chapter 42 on December 8, 1920. He died on September 21, 1925. He also served as a state officer of the Grand Royal Arch Masons chapter for Colorado, serving as a grand high priest in 1887.

Apparently the next order of Masons is the Council of Royal and Select Masters. He joined the Denver Council #1 on January 20, 1893. He served as secretary (recorder) of this group between 1910 and 1914. He served as Grand Recorder in this state between 1897 and his death in 1925 with the exception of 1906 when he was presiding officer of the Grand Council of Royal and Select Officers of Colorado. It appears to me that he was recorder all this time for the Council of Royal and Select Masters.

Apparently the next order of masons is the Knights Templar. He joined the Georgetown Commandery when it was formed in 1880 and was therefore a charter member. He served as recorder in that organization from 1882 to 1887 and became the commander of the Commandery in 1888. He served in a variety of other officerships at the same time. In 1893 he transferred to Commandery #25 of the Knights Templars in Denver, transferring in on June 6. He then transferred to the Ascalon Commandery #31 of the Knights Templars on September 13, 1910, and remained in that organization until he died in 1925.

Mr Newman volunteered to dig up some personal information about Foster from Masonic Temple Records, but the Temple burned shortly thereafter. Other sources of information include Everett Funk, from Chapter #42, William Graham, from Commandery #31, and John H Morrison concerning the Georgetown group.

References

Rocky Mountain News, September 22, 1925, p 10, columns 3&4 photo.
History of Clear Creek and Boulder Valleys, Colorado, O.L. Borkin and
Co, Historical Publishers, Chicago. p 511.

Morgan, DL and Hammond GP, *A guide to the manuscript collections of
the Bancroft Library*, University of California Press, Berkeley 1963
No listing for Foster

Portrait and Biographical Record of Denver and Vicinity, Colorado, Vol 1
1898, p 1024-4.

The Foster Collection Western History Section, Denver Public Library
Ernest LeNeve Foster, Trail 18: September 22, 1925