

Genealogy Escape RoomSM

Sam Foster: Who's Behind Those Foster Grants

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Accidentally, you are locked in at the Leominster Public Library after hours. It seems that you fell asleep in a cubicle while researching the history of sunglasses.

Your current research subject is Sam Foster, who along with William Grant founded the Foster Grant company in Leominster and helped popularize sunglasses.

You MUST complete your research on Sam Foster by answering a set of 20 questions related to the genealogy and family history of Sam Foster and his family. Sharpen those research skills and participate in this "actionable genealogy education" event!

NOTE: You are allowed to use ANY online sites for GENEALOGY research; most clues can be found on Ancestry at <https://ancestry.com> and FamilySearch at <https://familysearch.org>. And if you "cheat" by simply using Google to find information, you are only cheating yourself out of an amazing story of an amazing man.

Sam Foster: Who's Behind Those Foster Grants Clues, Answers, and Research Notes

Here are the questions, answers, and information on how the research was performed.

On what DATE was Sam Foster born?
22 June 1883

Research Log #2 "World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918," digital images, Ancestry (<https://www.ancestry.com>: accessed 28 Dec 2022), Samuel Foster, serial no. 1022, order no. A2907, Draft Board 14, Worcester County, Massachusetts; citing World War I Selective Service System Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918, NARA microfilm publication M1509

What is the STREET ADDRESS for the Sam Foster family on 1 January 1920?
43 Pleasant, Leominster, Worcester, Massachusetts

Research Log #5 1920 U.S. census, Worcester County, Massachusetts, population schedule, Leominster, Enumeration District 105, sheet No. 11A, house no. 43 dwelling 160, Samuel Foster: digital images, Ancestry (<https://www.ancestry.com>: accessed 28 Dec 2022); from National Archives microfilm publication T625_747.

What is the VALUE of the Sam Foster family home on 1 April 1930?
\$12,000 USD

Research Log #9 1930 U.S. census, Worcester County, Massachusetts, population schedule, Leominster, Enumeration District 14-224, sheet No. 2-A, house no. 43 dwelling 17, Samuel Foster: digital images, Ancestry (<https://www.ancestry.com>: accessed 28 Dec 2022); from National Archives microfilm 2340699.

BONUS: What is the value of the home in 1930 in today's money?
\$215,719 USD

Wolfram Alpha (<https://www.wolframalpha.com>) query "\$12,000 1930"
<https://www.wolframalpha.com/input?i=%2412%2C000+1930&key=vh70o>

What is the DEATH DATE for Sam Foster?
27 February 1966

Research Log #17 State of California Department of Health Services, Center for Health Statistics, "California Death Index, 1940-1997," database, Ancestry (<https://www.ancestry.com>: accessed 2 Jan 2023), entry for Samuel L. Foster, 013125441.

What is the DEATH LOCATION for Sam Foster?
Los Angeles, California

Research Log #17 State of California Department of Health Services, Center for Health Statistics, "California Death Index, 1940-1997," database, Ancestry (<https://www.ancestry.com>: accessed 2 Jan 2023), entry for Samuel L. Foster, 013125441.

When was Sam Foster MARRIED?
19 February 1904

Research Log #43 "Rhode Island Marriages, 1724-1916", database, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:F8VT-VRT>: 22 January 2020), Samuel Foster, 1904.

What is the BIRTH SURNAME of Sam Foster's wife?
Pobirsky

Research Log #43 "Rhode Island Marriages, 1724-1916", database, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:F8VT-VRT>: 22 January 2020), Samuel Foster, 1904.

WHERE was Sam Foster married?
Central Falls, Rhode Island

Research Log #43 "Rhode Island Marriages, 1724-1916", database, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:F8VT-VRT>: 22 January 2020), Samuel Foster, 1904.

What is the STREET ADDRESS for the Sam Foster family on 1 April 1950?
308 Sycamore Avenue, Los Angeles, California

Research Log #23 1950 U.S. census, Los Angeles County, California, population schedule, Los Angeles, Enumeration District 66-665, sheet No. 20, house no. 508 dwelling 250, Sam Foster: digital images, Ancestry (<https://www.ancestry.com>: accessed 3 Jan 2023); from National Archives record group number 29, microfilm roll 3061

WHEN did Sam Foster arrive in the United States?

June 1896

Research Log #26 National Archives at Boston; Waltham, Massachusetts; ARC Title: Petitions and Records of Naturalization, 2/1842 - Ca. 1991; NAI Number: 3432872; Record Group Title: Records of District Courts of the United States, 1685-2009; Record Group Number: Rg 21, Samuel Foster, declaration date 1 Jul 1911, Rhode Island, #6614

WHERE did Sam Foster depart from when emigrating to the United States?

Rotterdam, Holland

Research Log #26 National Archives at Boston; Waltham, Massachusetts; ARC Title: Petitions and Records of Naturalization, 2/1842 - Ca. 1991; NAI Number: 3432872; Record Group Title: Records of District Courts of the United States, 1685-2009; Record Group Number: Rg 21, Samuel Foster, declaration date 1 Jul 1911, Rhode Island, #6614

WHAT is the name of Sam Foster's SECOND WIFE?

Trude

Research Log #23 1950 U.S. census, Los Angeles County, California, population schedule, Los Angeles, Enumeration District 66-665, sheet No. 20, house no. 508 dwelling 250, Sam Foster: digital images, Ancestry (<https://www.ancestry.com>: accessed 3 Jan 2023); from National Archives record group number 29, microfilm roll 3061

WHAT is the name of Sam Foster's oldest child?

Joseph

Research Log #40 Ancestry.com. Rhode Island, U.S., Birth Index, 1636-1930 [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2000.

WHAT is the DEATH DATE for Sam Foster's oldest son?

11 November 1971

Research Log #35 U.S. Social Security Administration, "Social Security Death Index," database, Ancestry (<https://www.ancestry.com>: accessed 9 Jan 2023), entry for Joseph Foster, no. 019-05-7338.

What is the BIRTH SURNAME of Sam Foster's mother?

Talchinsky

Research Log #43 "Rhode Island Marriages, 1724-1916", database, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:F8VT-VRT>: 22 January 2020), Samuel Foster, 1904.

BONUS: For what crime was the rabbi who married Sam Foster in 1904 indicted and when?

Violation of the Volstead Act on 26 June 1922

Research Log #52 "Rabbi Held in Liquor Conspiracy," The New York Times (New York, New York), electronic newspaper, archived, (<https://www.nytimes.com> accessed 16 January 2023), abstract 27 June 1922, Section B, Page 28.

Conclusion

There is quite a bit of information available using online historical records, there are some questions that have yet to be answered:

- **Is FOSTER the actual surname?** Evidence suggests that Sam Foster emigrated from somewhere in Eastern Europe and was of the Jewish faith. But it is highly unlikely that the original surname was FOSTER.
- **Where was Sam Foster born?** Again, multiple online historical documents suggest Austria and Russia, the area in which Foster was born experienced a great deal of movement in terms of borders. Note in the 1920 US Census the location entered for Father and Mother ... there is an entry that is crossed out and, unfortunately, indecipherable. Written narratives list a variety of birth locations but without a source citation or evidence.
- **When were Sam Foster and Jennie Pobirsky divorced?** It was not easy to locate the second marriage information for Sam Foster, the first indication being the name TRUDE listed on the 1950 US Census.

Resource List

- **Ancestry**
<https://ancestry.com>
- **FamilySearch**
<https://familysearch.org>
- **FOSTER Sam b1883 Genealogy Research Log**
<https://genealogybargains.s3.amazonaws.com/FOSTER+Samuel+b1883+Genealogy+Research+Log.xlsx>
- **Genealogy Research Log TEMPLATE**
<https://genealogybargains.s3.amazonaws.com/Genealogy+Research+Log.xls>
- **FREE GENEALOGY CHEAT SHEETS** Genealogy Bargains
<https://genealogybargains.com/free-genealogy-cheat-sheets/>