



## Guide to the William Lawrence Foster Papers, 1850s-1928

### Administrative Information

**Title and Dates:**

William Lawrence Foster Papers, 1850s-1928

**Repository:**

New Hampshire Historical Society

30 Park Street

Concord, NH 03301

603-228-6688

<https://www.nhhistory.org/>

**Collection Number:**

2022.045

**Author of Finding Aid:**

Korrena Cowing

**Creator:**

Foster, William L. (William Lawrence), 1823-1897

**Language:**

The materials in this collection are in English

**Extent:**

1 box ; 0.21 linear feet

**Abstract:**

The William Lawrence Foster Papers consist primarily of speeches made by Foster in the mid-1800s, at events ranging from the dedication of Blossom Hill Cemetery in Concord, NH, to welcoming home the 2<sup>nd</sup> New Hampshire Infantry Regiment.

## Access and Use

### **Acquisition Information and Provenance:**

The William Lawrence Foster Papers were the gift of Susan Graham and Jon Kucera on February 2, 2022.

### **Processing Information:**

This collection was processed by Korrena Cowing in November 2023. The finding aid was written by Korrena Cowing in November 2023. This finding aid follows the standards set forth by *Describing Archives: A Content Standard*.

### **Access Restrictions:**

Available for research.

### **Location:**

The collection is housed at the New Hampshire Historical Society in Concord, New Hampshire.

### **Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements:**

The materials in this collection are paper based and have no special technical requirements for use.

### **Copyright/Conditions Governing Use:**

For permission to reproduce or publish materials from this collection, please contact the New Hampshire Historical Society. Users are responsible for following all copyright and intellectual property laws.

### **Preferred Citation:**

Item title, William Lawrence Foster Papers, 2022.045. New Hampshire Historical Society, Concord, NH. Date accessed.

## Collection Overview

### **Biographical Information:**

William Lawrence Foster was born in Westminster, VT, on June 1, 1823 to John and Sophia (Willard) Foster. He attended the common schools before studying at Keene and Walpole Academies. At 17, he began studying law at Levi Chamberlain's law office, later attending Harvard Law School from 1844 to 1845. He was admitted to the New Hampshire bar in 1845 at Keene, NH, initially becoming a partner with John Baxter.

On January 13, 1853 at Hopkinton, Foster married Harriet Morton Perkins (1834-1899), daughter of Hamilton and Clara (George) Perkins. Harriet was born February 17, 1834. Together they had five children: Clara (1856-1856), Elizabeth Bradley (1857-1941), Mary Bartlett (1859-1914), William Hamilton (1861-1928), and Roger Elliott (1867-1900). In April 1853, they moved from Keene to Concord, NH.

William Lawrence Foster held numerous judicial and political positions throughout his career. These positions include: Keene postmaster from 1845 to 1849, clerk of the New Hampshire Senate from 1849 to 1853, a member of Governor Dinsmore's staff and state law reporter from 1850 to 1856, commissioner of the United States Circuit Court from 1854 to 1862, a member of the state legislature from 1862 to 1863, judge of the Supreme Judicial Court from 1869 to 1874 and 1876 to 1881, and Chief Justice of the Circuit Court from 1874 to 1876. He also served as the first vice-president and later the president of the Southern New Hampshire Bar Association from 1893 to 1894.

William Lawrence Foster died in Rye, NH, on August 13, 1897. Harriet died April 30, 1899.

### **Collection Scope and Content Note:**

The William Lawrence Foster Papers is a small collection that consists primarily of speeches made by Foster in the mid-1800s, at events such as the dedication of Blossom Hill Cemetery, welcoming home the 2<sup>nd</sup> New Hampshire Infantry Regiment, in memory of Judge John Lowell, and for the 4<sup>th</sup> of July.

Also included in this collection is an address made at William L. Foster's memorial service and a few papers from or about his children, William Hamilton Foster and Elizabeth (Foster) Woodman. This includes a memorial on William Hamilton Foster; genealogy papers; and a letter from Elizabeth's husband, Edgar Woodman, to his sister discussing a range of topics from the state constitutional convention to climate change to his new daughter, Ruth. The materials in this collection date from the 1850s to 1928.

### **Arrangement:**

The materials in this collection are organized alphabetically by type.

## **Contents List**

### **Box 1**

|           |                                                                                                                                                         |
|-----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Folder 1  | Address: A Charge to the Grand Jury, undated                                                                                                            |
| Folder 2  | Address: A Fourth of July Address, 1850s                                                                                                                |
| Folder 3  | Address: Dedication of Blossom Hill Cemetery, 1860 July 13                                                                                              |
| Folder 4  | Address: Judge John Lowell, 1897 June                                                                                                                   |
| Folder 5  | Address: Reminiscences of Hon. William L. Foster Presented at the Second Annual Meeting of the Southern New Hampshire Bar Association, 1893 February 24 |
| Folder 6  | Address: To the Second New Hampshire Regiment, 1864                                                                                                     |
| Folder 7  | Address: William L. Foster memorial service, 1897                                                                                                       |
| Folder 8  | Address: William L. Foster memorial service, newspaper clipping, 1897 October 22                                                                        |
| Folder 9  | Genealogy of Elizabeth (Foster) Woodman, undated                                                                                                        |
| Folder 10 | Letter from "Ned" [Edgar H. Woodman] to his sister, 1889 January 20                                                                                     |
| Folder 11 | William Hamilton Foster memorial and print, 1928                                                                                                        |

## Subject Terms

### People:

Foster, William Hamilton, 1861-1928  
Foster, William L. (William Lawrence), 1823-1897  
Lowell, John, 1824-1897  
Woodman, Edgar Horace, 1847-1892  
Woodman, Elizabeth Bradley, 1857-1941

### Organizations:

Blossom Hill Cemetery  
Southern New Hampshire Bar Association  
United States. Army. New Hampshire Infantry Regiment, 2nd (1861-1865)

### Subjects:

Correspondence  
Dedications  
Genealogy  
Speeches, addresses, etc.  
United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865

### Locations:

Concord, NH

### Occupations:

Judges

## Related Materials

### Library

Foster, William Lawrence. *A Sketch of the Life and Character of Honorable Matthew Harvey*.  
Concord, NH: Edson C. Eastman, 1867. Call number: 920 H3421

Foster, William Lawrence. *Argument of Hon. William L. Foster before the Railroad Committee of the House of Representatives, June 21, 1887, upon House Bill No. 28, entitled "an act in amendment of Chapter one hundred of the laws of 1883, entitled 'an act providing for the establishment of Railroad corporations by General Law'" with an appendix containing the bill, and also the General Railroad Law and the Railroad Commissioners' Law of 1883*.  
Concord, NH: Republican Press Association, 1887. Call number: 385.1778 N532rcf

Foster, William Lawrence. *In the Matter of Paul R. George's Will : Supplemental Brief*. n.d. Call number: 920 G3488w

Foster, William Lawrence. *Merrimack and Cheshire Bars : Reminiscences Presented at the Second Annual Meeting of the Southern Bar Assoc., Feb. 24, 1893*. Concord, N.H.:  
Republican Press Association, 1893. Call number: 340.9 F758

Foster, William Lawrence. *Observance of Lord's Day : An Argument Before the Supreme Judicial Court, of the State of New Hampshire*. Concord, N.H.: William Butterfield, 1865.  
Call number: 263.4 F758

Foster, William Lawrence. *Religious Services and Address of William Lawrence Foster at the Consecration of Blossom Hill Cemetery, Concord, N.H., Friday, July 13, 1860*. Concord, N.H.: MacFarland & Jenks, 1860. Call number: 977.8b C744bL