

The maker of the instrument, James Foster, Jr., was born in Baltimore, Maryland in 1814 and at an early age moved to Cincinnati. He served an apprenticeship at the Cincinnati Type Foundry and remained with the foundry until it closed as a consequence of the financial depression of 1837. In 1838 he formed a partnership with William Wells, named Wells & Foster, and began manufacturing optical and philosophical instruments in a single room on Third Street. The firm subsequently moved to a storeroom in the old Universalist Church on Walnut Street where it remained until about 1852. The partnership was dissolved at that time and Foster thereafter worked alone at Fifth and Race Streets. He died on May 13, 1873 at his residence in Linwood, Spencer Township, Hamilton County, Ohio. Foster was known as a hard worker and the obituary notice in the *Cincinnati Inquirer* implied that he died from overwork. Among his known surviving instruments is a solar compass in the collection of the Oregon State Logging Museum at Klamath Falls, Oregon and a transit in the Ohio State Museum at Columbus, Ohio.