

Fremont Everett's "Other Life"

Fremont seems not to have been happy in his marriage, which I believe had been arranged by the elder Everetts and Shumways. And he seems to have had "an eye for the ladies," according to the younger Merewethers^{1 2}.

At any rate he maintained a passionate relationship by mail with the lady in Denver, but was also deeply involved with another person, one May Otis Blackburn, whom he had met in Portland and who had a past and a future that would raise eyebrows in the most liberal society. [Fremont Everett's love letters](#) to her, mostly written around 1917 and 1918, were dug up in 1925 in Topanga Canyon. The lady was what was then called a "grifter" and later the leader of a bizarre cult and was discussed in [Cecilia Rasmussen's column](#) of [May 23, 1999](#).

We do not yet know when Fremont's pursuit of May Otis Weiland Blackburn flagged; after the death of his wife Eva in October of 1927 he drifted and mooched on his daughter Clara, herself in difficult straits. In 1936 he visited Denver and married Emma Shumway August 21 of that year; he died October 16th and was buried the next day.

¹ Feb 2013 e-mail from Allen Merewether to Mike Merewether ... I knew something about the elder Fremont's social activities. Based on family stories from the distant past, Fremont Everett and Mary Evelyn Shumway were never seriously in love and Fremont, at least, was not content. Unfortunately, I can't relate these stories to a calendar. Fremont had for many years been attracted to a woman in Denver who was either a sister or a sister-in-law of Mary Evelyn [this was Emma Hubbel Coberley who became the second wife of Eva's brother Edmund Shumway]. Sometime after learning that the husband of his appealing friend had passed away [in 1914!], Fremont and most of his remaining funds boarded a train in Portland and traveled to Denver. Cupid was no longer smiling on Fremont, because he had a stroke or a heart attack a few hours before arriving in Denver and was staggering about on the platform when local friends met him. I don't know how long he lived thereafter or if he married that woman. Nevertheless, she provided a grave and a headstone for him in the Shumway family plot which your sister, Kathleen, and I have viewed. Understandably, our Grandmother Clara May Everett Merewether, on a little farm near Willamina, OR, with two boys and no money, was upset about her father's selfishness and lack of consideration.

² and from Mike Merewether ... As I recall, Dad [Fremont Walter Merewether] said his grandfather had an eye for other women and his marriage was more or less an arranged marriage and he wasn't really happy in it and was not of strong character. Makes me wonder why dad adopted his name when he was born just Walter Merewether. I recall mention of a beautiful red head who was on the payroll of the lumber company.