

ROCHESTER HISTORY

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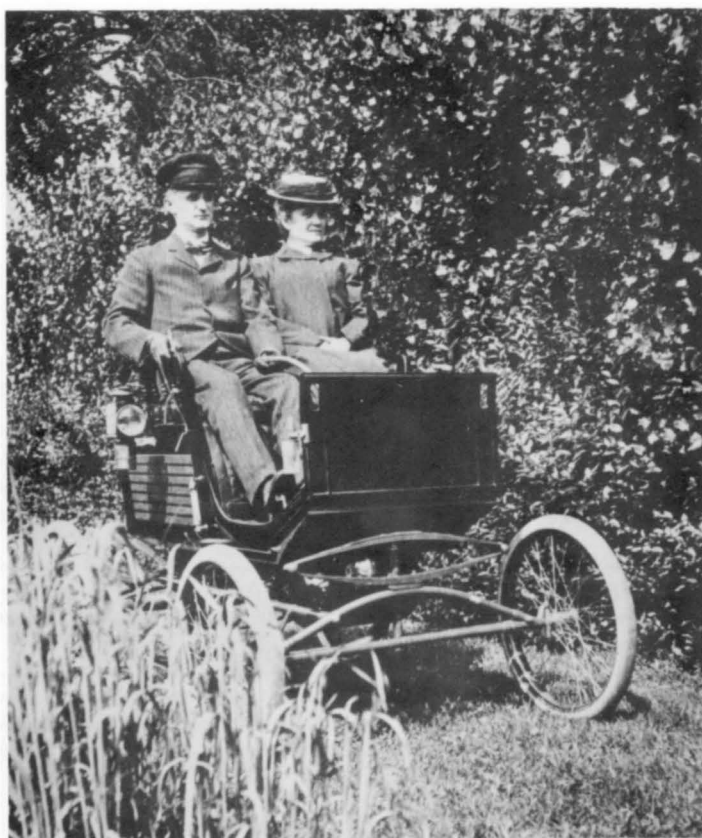
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No. 1

George Eastman

by Elizabeth Brayer





Above: George Eastman at the age of three in 1857. This miniature ambrotype in a case appears to be the only surviving early childhood photograph of the person who set the world to snapping pictures.

Cover: George Eastman and an unidentified passenger in his handmade 4½ horsepower Stanley Steamer Locomobile about 1900. An early president of the Automobile Club, Eastman "believed that automobiling is destined to be a great benefit to this country," and always had five or six of the latest models in his garage. The Stanley twins who made this "flying teapot," as the press dubbed it, also made photographic dry plates. They sold their dry plate business to Eastman in 1904.

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Eastman's house in Waterville, New York. On the 100th anniversary of Eastman's birth the house was moved to the grounds of George Eastman House of Photography (as it was then called.) Twenty-five years later it was moved to Genesee Country Museum.

George Eastman At Home

by Elizabeth Brayer

In the spring of 1902 George Eastman bought what he called "the last farm within city limits," the eight-and-one-half acre property of Marvin Culver on East Avenue and by July he had engaged the city's most prominent landscape architect, Alling S. DeForest, to lay out the grounds and gardens; and the city's most prominent architect, J. Foster Warner, to design an impressive "colonial" mansion. The self-sufficient estate that resulted, one interviewer wrote, seemed "as unlikely as a ranch in Central Park."

Eastman's yearning to create this bucolic world had its roots in a childhood to which he could never return. Born in Waterville, New York, he spent his first six years in the modest Greek revival house¹ on his father's thirty-acre nursery, which specialized in fruit trees and rose bushes. Eastman's purchase of this former Culver farm was perhaps an unconscious attempt to recapture the sights, sounds and smells of earlier days.

George's father, George Washington Eastman, had been founder and proprietor of what newspaper advertisements called "the oldest commercial college in the world," opened in 1842. With his wife and first child, G.W. Eastman had lived in Rochester

until 1849 when mother and daughter returned to Waterville and father commuted weekly between Waterville and Rochester for the next eleven years. In 1860, just as the Civil War was breaking out, the Eastman's moved back to Rochester, so that the family could be together.

In April 1862, two years after the family was reunited, George's father died, leaving six-year-old George, his mother and his two older sisters, one crippled by polio. In order to continue their middle class lifestyle, his mother, Maria Kilbourn Eastman, was left with few alternatives other than to take in selected boarders. Under the direction of George's uncle, A. Russell Eastman, the Commercial College continued in the Reynolds' Arcade until 1872; but not as a money-maker. Eventually it was sold and finally incorporated into what is now the Rochester Business Institute.

In 1868, young George, then thirteen, left school to work for Captain Cornelius Waydell, insurance agent in the Reynolds' Arcade, in a \$2.50 - a - week job that included cleaning cuspidors. After-hours George fashioned wire puzzles, bookshelf brackets, and backgammon boards in a home workshop, selling them to friends and business associates. He had a keen sense for business and was soon holding mortgages on building lots in Brighton. By 1874, after upwardly mobile job shifts, George became a clerk in the Rochester Savings Bank. Soon he was earning more than \$1,000 a year, a princely sum for the time.

One day in 1877 a bank employee suggested that George take a camera along on his vacation to Santa Domingo. He bought a cumbersome view camera, a set of heavy glass plates to make the negatives, all the messy chemicals he needed to carry with him, and rigged up a teepee so that he could develop the plates on the spot. Though he later cancelled the vacation, the purchase of the camera marked the beginning of a lifelong fascination with photography.

From at least four photographers, both amateur and professional, and from reading the *British Journal of Photography*, he learned how to coat the plates with the emulsions that he mixed and cooked in his mother's kitchen.² In 1879 he patented and licensed a mechanism for coating plates. A year later he was working nights and weekends making plates to sell and fighting sleep as he worked during the day as a bank clerk. His business grew and his inventiveness and entrepreneurship led to his marketing the first commercially successful flexible film in 1884. Development of film proved important to motion picture

Maria Kilbourn Eastman, mother of George Eastman, took in boarders to help raise the children after her husband died when George was six. One of her boarders was Morton Rundel, George's cousin who left most of his estate to build the Rundel Memorial Building that houses the Rochester Public Library.



pioneers such as Thomas Alva Edison.³

Four years later Eastman began manufacturing the first camera specifically designed for film, a simple box affair he called the Kodak camera. It allowed those with no experience in photography to take one hundred snapshots, then send the whole camera back to the Eastman Company where it was reloaded and returned to the sender.⁴ By 1900, when he introduced the one-dollar Brownie camera, Eastman was the largest manufacturer of photographic materials in the world. Photography was within the reach of the average person and Eastman's contributions to its advance changed the subjects, variety, and number of photographs taken in the world forever.

The burgeoning market for film made millions of dollars for Eastman. He put his considerable fortune to work through major projects in education, medicine, music, dentistry, municipal reform, advancement of blacks, and benefit programs for Eastman Kodak Company employees. . . . And he built himself a house.



George Eastman and Thomas Alva Edison. Eastman developed a flexible film that made it possible for Edison's new moving picture camera to make "movies."



The George Eastman House built in 1905 by architect J. Foster Warner. The 42,000 square foot house was built of steel and concrete with 14-inch thick walls and a brick, stone and wood shingle facade to make it look "colonial."

The George Eastman House

Vistors to the restored George Eastman House, as it was called during his lifetime and since it became a museum of photography in 1949, enter as did earlier generations of guests, from all parts of the world, through glass and wrought iron doors, to what is probably the most successful part of the house architecturally. From the welcoming entrance hall the visitor can preview the other public access areas. This hall is where Eastman hung the most impressive paintings in the only old master collection to come to Rochester. He was particularly fond of the large Tintoretto *Portrait of a Venetian Gentleman* which usually hung in the front hall, the even larger full-length *Portrait of General Hay MacDowell* by Sir Thomas Raeburn which hung in the side hall and the haunting seascape, *View Off the Dutch Coast*, by Jan van de Capelle, a favorite that wandered from room to room.

Eastman's life-long habit was to try his paintings on walls and easels in different rooms the same way that he loved to move the furniture and carpets about. In the living room hung portraits by Rembrandt, Hals, and Van Dyck; in the billiard room were portraits by British masters Romney, Reynolds, Lawrence and Raeburn. At any one moment, as many as ten paintings could be hung throughout the house on approval from New York dealers. Most of these paintings, about sixty in all, may be seen at the Memorial Art Gallery of the University of Rochester, Eastman's caretaker by bequest. A few, including Corot's charming *Two Peasants Near a Pond*, belong to Eastman House.

A watercolor by Rochesterian Charles Gruppe, purchased in 1892, and a small genre scene in oils, *In the House of the Field Marshal*, purchased from the French Salon of 1893, mark the beginning of Eastman's art collecting. After the 1905 move into the mansion, he appointed Frank Lusk Babbott, a childhood friend from Waterville who became a New York manufacturer and lawyer as well as chairman of the Brooklyn Museum, to act as one-man "art committee," scouring the galleries with Eastman's taste in mind. Babbott tried unsuccessfully to interest Eastman in his own predilections for oriental art and Italian primitives, but succeeded only in getting Eastman started on a fine collection of netsukes (a small carved Japanese toggle used to secure a purse to clothing).

At Eastman's renowned New Year's Eve parties, guests were dropped by chaffeurs under the porte cochere, where they proceeded up the side stair to leave their wraps, when prominated down the grand stair ablaze with tiny, twinkling lights, to be greeted by Mr. Eastman and his hostesses, which often included his niece, Ellen Dryden of Kenilworth and later Evanston, Illinois; Josephine Dickman, widow of Kodak's London manager; Mary Mulligan, wife of Eastman's physician and surgeon who arranged many of his parties; and one or two other women friends.

The Living Room

Originally planned as two rooms, a library and living room that shared a back-to-back fireplace, this cavernous area was made into one room (but the ceiling was too low for the square footage) just as construction of the house was about to begin in the spring of 1903. Eastman used this room primarily for community planning sessions and entertaining large groups during his thirty year reign as Rochester's most powerful citizen. As befits its size, the furnishings are massive and the general effect of calculated informality recalls the reading room of a gentlemen's club. Friends remembered this room, indeed the whole house, as both elegant and homey, a difficult combination to bring off successfully.

Eastman's involvement in community affairs began about 1886 when he made a sizeable (for his salary) contribution to Mechanic's Institute, now the Rochester Institute of Technology. By 1892, still in his thirties, he was a board member of the Institute and also of the Orphan Asylum, now Hillside Children's Center. By 1906 he was president of both and had built new

buildings for each. He also built the Eastman Laboratory for physics and biology for the University of Rochester.

Eastman was deluged with so many appeals from individuals that he turned to the Society for the Organization of Charity whose one paid employee agreed to screen the requests he received. His plan of 1911 to build low-income, four-story tenements along State Street was rejected by city planners who insisted upon fire escapes rather than Eastman's stair tower. The tenements were objected to by clergymen thought single family houses for the poor in the suburbs were preferable to overcrowded tenements. Eastman felt that many people preferred to stay in familiar neighborhoods rather than move to the suburbs. The housing units were never built.

During World War One the Eastman House living room was used for meetings of the Rochester Red Cross and the Rochester Patriotic and Community Fund, commonly called the War Chest. Eastman headed both groups and at war's end, as most communities disbanded their war chests, he encouraged Rochester's to continue as a "Community Chest." In fact, it is believed he coined that term which continued in use until the Chest became the United Way to conform to the name used in most communities. His organization of the Community Chest was calculated to have one annual appeal instead of many.

A life-long Republican, Eastman was more interested in politics on the municipal than state and federal levels. Rochester, he often said, was "the town I am interested in above all others." Better management and more efficient government were his stated goals and he was not enamored with the Republican machine that ran Rochester even though a boyhood friend, George Aldridge, was the "boss" of that machine. An inveterate reader of many newspapers and magazines, he learned of a private, New York-based, non-partisan and non-profit organization set up to research and investigate the management of municipal government. In 1915 he founded and funded the Bureau of Municipal Research (BMR) which continues today as the Center for Governmental Research.

Among early projects investigated by the BMR at Eastman's request was a new charter for the city and the city manager form of government, which was adopted in 1924, effectively removing city government from purely partisan control. Among municipal projects which Eastman supported was a Civic Center, planned in the 1920s to be built in the Genesee River bed. So that the city

would not have to erect a temporary office building until the Center was completed, Eastman purchased the old Kimball Tobacco Company building on the site of the present War Memorial and provided it rent free as City Hall Annex (which it remained until 1948). The Center on the river was never built.

A new Chamber of Commerce building was built by Eastman in 1915 and enlarged by an addition in 1926. One of the architects associated with the original building was Claude Bragdon, whom Eastman also engaged to design a loggia and sunken garden for the property west of Eastman House which he acquired in 1916. It is now known as the West Garden. A falling-out occurred, at least in Bragdon's mind, when Eastman decided not to follow the architect's advice to paint the ceiling of the Grand Hall of the Chamber in gold and bright colors, noting in an aside that for the same amount of money he could buy an ambulance for France (World War One was then raging). Bragdon's feelings were further hurt when he heard that Eastman had plowed up his garden to plant potatoes, but the architect was apparently misinformed as photographs and documents show an intact garden and indicate that only open lawn was turned into a "victory garden."

The living room was also a music room. From a list of about 1,500 friends, Kodak executives, University and Eastman School personnel, about one hundred persons, some regular, some rotating, were invited for each Sunday evening. GE, as he liked his friends to address him, greeted his guests as they arrived at 5 p.m. and seated them in canvas chairs set up in the living room. The first segment of the musicale, given by the Herman Dossenbach Quintette (from 1905-1920) and the Kilbourn Quartet (through the 20s) lasted somewhat more than an hour. By 6:30 the guests were enjoying a simple supper with lobster newburg, corn beef hash and pitchers of milk or Prohibition beer at tables set without linen in the dining room. Then they retired to the conservatory for an hour of organ music with a solo vocalist or a quartet playing from the landing. Finally GE bid his guests goodbye.

Among those who came every Sunday until his death in 1911 was Eastman's cousin Morton Rundel.⁵ As a youth Rundel had come to Rochester from Alexander, New York, eight miles south of Batavia, and while attending the Eastman Commercial College he boarded with the Eastman's. Rundel ran a picture frame shop and art gallery, hardly a lucrative career, but also bought Kodak

stock at an early date. By his death it was worth about sixty-five times what he paid for it. Rundel, a shy bachelor like Eastman, came early on Sundays for a game of billiards with his cousin.

On a more frivolous plane, when the dancing craze arrived about 1910, even the middle-aged caught the fever and GE, who had rarely cut a rug, rolled up the rugs in the living room, organized a class, and hired a teacher. With his mind for detail he wanted to know how many inches to put his feet forward, sideways, or back. Paying no particular attention to the music, he vigorously counted aloud as he turned or moved. Sometimes the oriental carpets were rolled up for dancing in the hall and conservatory too. At other times special dancing and supper pavilions were constructed over the east terrace and lawn, decorated with those ubiquitous twinkling lights and greenery from the estate's four greenhouses. Fireworks in the garden punctuated these evenings.

The Little Library

The small room to the west of the hall, originally a reception room, with walls hung in celadon green striped silk as background for watercolor paintings, was Eastman's favorite in 1905, possibly because of its coziness and good proportions. In 1927 it was converted into the present library where the master of the house liked to sit before its coal fire and read.

Eastman had been a constant reader since his youth when, his formal schooling having been cut short, he haunted bookstores. At Scrantom's Lending Library he loaded up with *Oliver Optic* books. These stereotypical clean-cut young heroes were interested in geography and natural science, went traveling, or enlisted in the Navy. Clerks at the Steele & Avery Bookstore on State Street, which encouraged browsers, remembered a young Eastman who came often, asking to see one or another volume of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, which was kept in the basement. After he became interested in photography, Eastman's ledger books show purchases of German and French dictionaries as well as a subscription to the *British Journal of Photography*.

His reading tastes remained both eclectic and catholic: on the same day that he ordered both Vasari's *Lives of the Painters* and *Two Thousand Eggs a Year* from Scrantom's. Eastman subscribed to the *London Times*, several New York papers, all five Rochester dailies, and many magazines. He belonged to several book clubs and

avored non-fiction works except in the years before his mother's death in 1907 when he ordered works of fiction to be delivered to her.

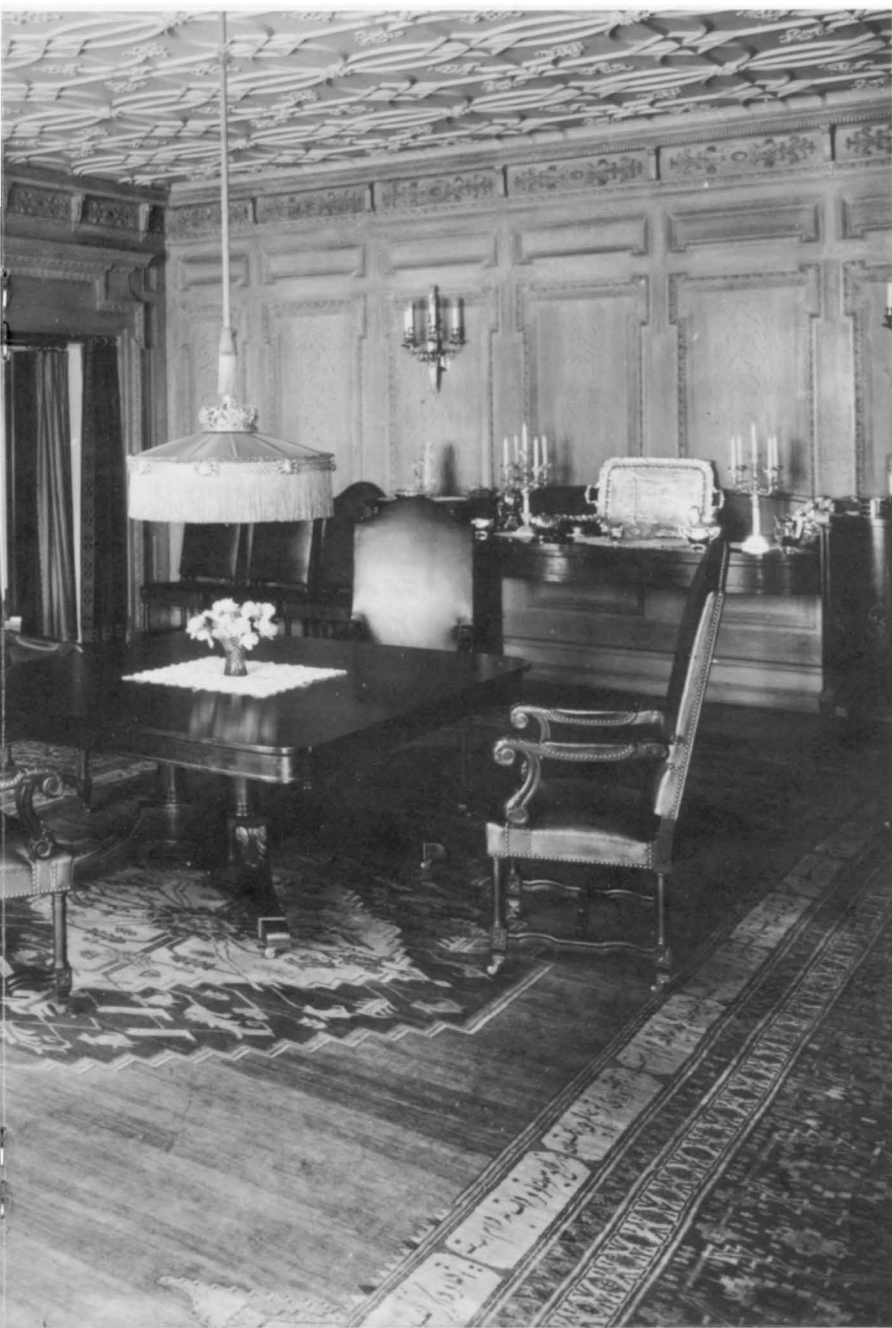
"He read biographies and was interested in history from a biographical standpoint," said the Rev. Murray Bartlett, rector of St. Paul's Church, later president of Hobart College, and a close friend. "He got every important serious book that came out and read parts of everything. Later on he became much interested in social ethics and philosophy. He was one of the best read men I knew." Besides the books he bought, people sent him works they had written or were trying to promote. In 1911 he had a librarian catalog his 2,000 books, then housed in the East Library (living room), West Library (billiard room), Upstairs Library and casually strewn about in piles on tables everywhere. On days when he breakfasted or lunched alone, he read a chapter a day of whatever book commanded his interest. Frank Buck's *Bring Em Back Alive* about animal life in Africa was a favorite of his later years.

Eugene Goosens, whom Eastman appointed as conductor of the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, presented Eastman with miniature models of three transatlantic ships he had taken in his long career of "crossing the pond" between 1879 and 1928. His gratitude was immediately apparent, "Goosens recalled, "as it always was when he was the object of an affectionate gesture." Two of the ships, the *Majestic* and the *Berengaria*, were models of steamers he took at the start of his two African trips in 1926 and 1927. He steamed to and from Europe on the *Olympic* in 1911. He mounted the models on small seas of mirrors and kept them on a shelf in his library, being "almost as proud of them as he was of the trophies of the hunt," Goosens said. "His African trips were the only subject on which I remember him becoming really talkative, and here he would go into great detail and relate much concerning his experiences with Martin and Osa Johnson in the African Veldt."

Above the doors of the library were carved renderings of a lion and rhinoceros, representing the trophies of his first African trip. A stand with an unabridged Webster's Dictionary, a thirty-inch globe, and a custom-designed map table covered with rhinoceros hide completed this intimate retreat.



The resemblance of Eastman's dining room to the State Dining Room of the White House have led Eastman to choose it as the place to make his dramatic announcement to the two institutions: The University of Rochester, Massachusetts Institute of Technology



White House of the same period and by the same architects and decorators may
it in December 1924 that he was distributing the bulk of his fortune to four
logy, Hampton and Tuskegee Institutes.

The Billiard Room

A double opening from the little library brings one to what was originally the billiard room. Eastman had a custom designed table made so that either pool or billiards, both early weekend activities, could be played, though the popularity of each declined by the time he built the room. Ornamental painted glass roundels from Germany were placed high in the small leaded glass panes, depicting the history of transporation.

The Boston and New York firm of A.H. Davenport, whose chief designer was Francis Bacon, supplied the majority of Eastman's furnishings and furniture including his billiard table. After the billiard table was removed to the second floor in 1907, this room remained the center for entertainment that preceded the more formal and intimate dinners for twelve to twenty guests. This billiard room served too as a private retreat. Each evening the house staff knew Mr. Eastman was home when they heard strains and plinks from the player piano or the sounds of the Edison phonograph wafting through the house. A telephone in this room was one of twenty-one table and wall models throughout the house and grounds that connected to a central



The Billiard Room/Sitting Room about 1930. In 1907 Eastman moved the billiard table from this room and over the years he gathered memorabilia of what Eastman called "a long and interesting life." Portraits by Romney, Raeburn, Gainsborough, Reynolds, Hoppner and Lawrence replaced engravings that originally hung. A Corot landscape rests on the easel.

switchboard. A “slave” clock on the wall was one of many that ran from the “master” clock.

The platform behind the billiard table was designed by Eastman to hold the vacuum cleaning equipment for this room. The paneled teak walls are indicative of the quality materials and workmanship found throughout the house. The lighting fixtures installed throughout the house were of the highest quality available. They were produced by Edward F. Caldwell & Company in New York.

Besides billiards, Eastman’s avocations included bicycling, camping, fishing and hunting, bridge, horseback riding and “automobiling.” His own cycling began as part of a national, even international craze that gripped the country in the latter half of the 1890s. During the summer of 1896 Eastman and a handful of friends and business associates cycled for four months throughout Europe, “making a circular trip that included nearly every capital city outside Italy.” The cycle trip ended with a foray into Russia by Eastman and A.H. Overman, bicycle manufacturer and half-owner of Oak Lodge, Eastman’s North Carolina farm and shooting box.

Bicycling through the tulip fields of Holland in the 1890s led to nostalgic annual orders for thousands of bulbs whose blossoms then blanketed the grounds of Eastman House each spring. “Right now,” he wrote one year on June 2, “my garden is ablaze with Darwin tulips.”

The Conservatory

This great two-story court, originally furnished with wicker and rataan and always banked with palms, ferns, vines, and potted plants, created the ambiance of a small hotel. Indeed Eastman must have had the hotel aspect of his house in mind when he planned fifteen bedrooms, each with its own bath. Eastman perpetuated the fiction that the house was built for his eighty-three-year-old mother through his biographer, Carl Ackerman.

But from 1890 on he had entertained and lodged Kodak executives from far-off places in his own home rather than at a hotel or club and with the building of the house and the widening of friendships, he became more expansive with invitations. Thomas Edison and extended family, Adolph Ochs of the *New York Times*, Cmdr. Richard Byrd enroute to the North and South

Poles, General Pershing of World War One, President Warren G. Harding, Prince William of Sweden, Osa and Martin Johnson, and others of lesser fame were houseguests while the list of breakfast and luncheon guests is almost endless.

In an instance typical of Eastman's breakfast meetings, an audience seeker or conferee boarded the midnight train in New York and was met at dawn by Eastman's chauffeur and green Packard ("any red cap can show you my car," Eastman said) and he was whisked off to 900 East Avenue where the organ was already playing. Eastman was there, cautiously cordial.⁶

"On time," he would say, leading his guest to the gleaming table in the center of the room where the mellow tones of the wood contrast with the crisp Italian linen and the frosty highlights of the silver service. "Let us sit down," he would say, his grapefruit partially eaten, his coffee poured, his scone buttered.

The guest presents his case as chances are he is there to ask Eastman's support, financial and moral, for some cause. Or perhaps he is a consulting architect for a building project. Eastman, in dark grey business suit, sprightly vest, and merry scarf set off with "a great plum of iridescent black pearl," pours some yellow cream, courtesy of one of his Jersey cows, into his coffee and listens contemplatively to the guest over the strains of Handel's "Largo" from *Xerxes*. A butler appears with a humidor of cigarettes and Eastman produces from his breast pocket "a slender onyx holder, with trick ejector tip, gold and delicately ornamented." He fits the cigarette to the tip with deft care and leans back to enjoyment.

Friends think the massive elephant head over the door from the conservatory to the terrace adds a jarring note to the subdued splendor of the room, but it represents the culmination of Eastman's life as a sportsman. His father and many of his five Eastman uncles were hunters and fishermen and he followed in their footsteps at his "shooting boxes" in Virginia and North Carolina and with ever more elaborate camping trips to Labrador, the prairie states, the Pacific Northwest and Alaska.

In the early 1920s Martin and Osa Johnson, a swashbuckling husband and wife nature film team approached Eastman to buy stock in a company that would send them to Africa for four years to film the wildlife there. Then in 1925 Carl Akeley of the American Museum of Natural History, New York City, suggested Eastman combine a visit to the Johnsons' African retreat with a safari that would provide the museum with animal



The Conservatory, enlarged by 10 feet in 1919 and decorated by Elizabeth Averell Rogerson of Arden Studios in New York. Eastman shot the elephant in 1928 on his second trip to Africa. The tusks were so heavy, wooden ones were substituted. Eastman ate his breakfast and lunch here and held musicales here on Sundays.

trophies for dioramas in an African Hall which Akeley planned. During a six-month safari, Eastman bagged all the animals the museum wanted except an elephant and rare white rhinoceros. He returned the next year for a trip up the Nile with the Johnsons to get his trophies.

The Dining Room

In 1902 McKim, Mead & White, architects, had just finished "restoring" the White House for President Theodore Roosevelt, creating for the first time "public rooms" throughout the first floor and a State Dining Room furnished by A.H. Davenport. That same year, these architects were hired by Eastman as consultants to design the interiors of his "public rooms." The combination of "bronzed" blue leather chairs, a strapped Gothic ceiling, a rose and blue Persian carpet, grayed oak walls, a magnificent fireplace, crystal and silver sparkling on white damask on the sideboard, and an orchid at each lady's place, originated at Eastman House in the "state" dining room. In particular the new dining room chairs from Davenport designed for the White House and Eastman house show a marked resemblance.

This may be why Eastman chose his dining room for that dramatic moment on December 8, 1924, when after commenting that he thought "men who wait until they die before leaving their money were pie-faced mutts," he picked up his fountain pen and in the presence of ten men, representing four institutions in which he was particularly interested, signed away the bulk of his fortune. Putting the pen down he smiled and said, "Now I feel better."

Benefitting from that particular meeting were the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Hampton and Tuskegee Institutes, and the University of Rochester. Technical education interested Eastman because his business employed a skilled work force. Ties with MIT began in 1890 when he hired a young graduate to plan and manage what came to be Kodak Park where most of the world's photographic film was to be manufactured. By 1900 the Eastman Kodak Company had more MIT graduates in key positions and Eastman asked to receive the annual reports of the Institute. From these reports he learned that the cramped MIT had an offer of prime land along the Charles River in Cambridge, but no funds to build a new campus there.

Eastman decided to change that. With the sole condition that he remain anonymous, he gave, between 1912 and 1920, a total of \$20 million for the construction of the present campus. Students, alumni and other millionaires around the country enjoyed this eight year guessing game until, in 1920, it was finally revealed that the mysterious and bountiful "Mr. Smith" was really George Eastman.

Eastman firmly believed that the best way for blacks to enter the mainstream of American life was to better their educational opportunities. Both of his parents had been active in the abolitionist movement before the Civil War and the homes of his grandfather and uncle were active stops along the underground railroad. In 1897 Eastman bought the lodge property in North Carolina. Rather than evict the several large black families that were squatting on the land, he allowed them to stay, build houses and manage what grew to become a small plantation. In 1919 he built an elementary school on his property for the tenants and other blacks in the neighborhood; for this "Eastman School" as with almost all of his philanthropies, he insisted that the people benefitting from the project raise at least a portion of its cost, the better to appreciate its value.

Eastman was a receptive target for a visit early in the century from the charismatic Booker T. Washington, who had organized Tuskegee Institute, a school for blacks in Alabama, and had served as its president from its founding in 1881 to his death in 1915. Washington believed that blacks could advance themselves by being efficient workers and educating themselves, a philosophy that dovetailed with Eastman's own. In 1901 Washington sent Eastman a copy of his newly published autobiography, *Up From Slavery*, along with a Tuskegee annual statement. He was startled to receive an unsolicited check for \$2,000 from Eastman.

Shortly thereafter, Washington came to Eastman House. The story has come down, and is possibly apochryphal, that as Washington approached the front door of 900 East Avenue, it was noted that he was not in "black tie" apparel as the other guests were and that Eastman beat a hasty retreat to change into a business suit too, in order to put Washington at ease.

Eastman's interest in establishing dental clinics as pilot projects in Rochester and five European capitals had its probable genesis in the fact that both he and his mother had poor teeth when young. The toothaches of childhood followed by teeth yanked out by pliers while sitting at the kitchen table and then ill-fitting

dentures, were a strong enough memory to convince Eastman that preventive dentistry for indigent children would "get me more results for my money . . . than any other philanthropic scheme I had investigated . . . Money spent in the care of children's teeth is one of the wisest expenditures that can be made."

When he was persuaded about 1920 by Abraham Flexner of the Rockefeller-endowed General Education Board that Rochester was a good place for training dentists -- hence the University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry. The name remains, even though no dentists have graduated for some years. Eastman gave more than five million dollars towards the medical center, including the dental building; and one-third of the cost to build Strong Memorial Hospital in memory of his first partner, Henry Alvah Strong. He persuaded Strong's daughters to give the other two-thirds of the cost.

Eastman gave the University of Rochester more than thirty million dollars during his lifetime and twenty million more by bequest. Initially skeptical of college graduates unless trained in a science that was of value to his business, he came to believe that "the progress of the world depends almost entirely upon education. Fortunately the most permanent institutions of men are educational. That usually endure even when governments fail."

Gardens

The gardens and grounds of Eastman House, as well as the third floor retreat containing a projection room, laboratory for photography and cooking, storeroom for guns and fishing tackle, were where Eastman kept his playthings and relaxed from work. Here he snapped Kodak pictures of his grandniece and nephew or chatted with the children of his organist or chauffeur. (In a story he loved to tell, the chauffeur's daughter, upon being asked if she knew Mr. Eastman, replied, "Sure, he's the man who lives in our backyard.") On the grounds were the Jersey and Guernsey cows that gave milk, the chickens and vegetables for the pot, the horses for a pre-breakfast ride, the greenhouses with the palms and orchids, the heated lily pond with rare tropical varieties, the rose garden with a bush grown from a slip from a rose bush on the Kilbourn homestead in New England. At any season the lawns and carriage house could be festooned with new tents made to his specifications by Abercrombie & Fitch and subsequently being

tested in real conditions of rain, sleet, and wind.

The carriage house always had more automobiles than carriages, usually about six at a time ranging from, in the early days, a Stanley Steamer, a Winton, and a Cadillac runabout, to, in the 1920s, Lincoln and Packard limousines and a made-in-Rochester Cunningham car with steamboat auto whistle to blow lesser vehicles out of the way. Rochesterians remember that in the 1920s his cars were all dark green or blue -- "good serviceable colors," he said -- leading them to forget that early on his cars were more dashing. "I have taken part of my October dividend and bought a six-cylinder Stevens-Duryea runabout," he wrote to his partner Colonel Henry A. Strong in 1906. "It is painted a brilliant, bright red, vermillion, crimson, and as I drive up to the office in the morning the people jump to the windows and think it is sunrise again."

Often, just before leaving for 343 State Street in the mornings, he walked out into the garden and picked a flower for his buttonhole.

To those who never crossed the threshold of 900 East Avenue, the legendary George Eastman remained a shrouded symbol of power, able to awe and attract talented people and to command resources for the unleashing of new technologies and business forces. But to his guests, George Eastman at home was the gracious host, who took pleasure in entertaining them. At home he was more relaxed than at the office, if not quite so carefree as when he was camping in the wilds, on safari, or at his North Carolina hunting lodge. He told friends it had been "fun" to build



The West Garden in 1919. Eastman bought the property, demolished the house and engaged Claude Bragdon to design the garden, an adaptation of that of Sir Edwin Lutyens of Hestercombe, England. The House is shown here being cut to move it back 9 feet, 4 inches to enlarge the conservatory.

George Eastman in his garden holding the son of his grandniece, Mrs. George Dryden of Evanston, Illinois.



and furnish a self-sufficient urban estate from scratch, "It is a rest from building factories."

To those who came to Eastman House on community business, the shy, terse, diminutive figure suddenly seemed articulate, forceful, progressive. Some people, such as Isaac Adler, acting mayor of Rochester from 1930 to 1932, were surprised to find that "in spite of the adulation to which he was accustomed, he was simple, direct, and informal."

Endnotes

1. Residents of Waterville are divided on exactly where Eastman was born. Most, including some distant cousins, say that as Maria Eastman's confinement approached she and her daughters moved to the Eastman family homestead outside of Waterville in the township of Marshall. Eastman was born there and the family moved to the Greek Revival house, traditionally called Eastman's birthplace, when he was several months old. Although no written records survive, this local version is supported by the fact that George Washington Eastman was commuting from Rochester.
2. Four Rochester photographers who helped Eastman get started were George Monroe, George Selden, John H. Kent and Charles Forbes. From his bank desk Eastman saw Professor Forbes enter the Rochester Free Academy with a camera under his arm and subsequently he visited him to talk about the photographic process. He took lessons from Monroe who had been making dry plates since 1871 and from Selden, an attorney who applied for a patent on a automobile in 1879 and who was also an enthusiastic amateur photographer, John H. Kent was a professional portrait photographer

whose studio Eastman haunted and who became a member of the original board of directors of the Eastman Dry Plate and Film Company in 1884.

3. Eastman and Edison were correspondence and business associates for forty years before they came together socially on Edison's seventy-fifth birthday in 1924 and kindled a warm friendship. Unknown to each other, in the 1880s, they were working separately, but simultaneously -- Eastman on film, Edison on apparatus -- on the components that created the motion picture industry.

4. The original Kodak camera loaded with paper-backed film cost \$25. Although instructions for developing that film were included, most amateurs chose to send the camera back to the factory for processing and reloading. The cost was \$10 and was the genesis of the giant photofinishing industry. Eastman marketed a transparent celluloid film in 1889 which proved suitable for development as motion picture film.

In subsequent reincorporations, the Eastman Dryplate Co., of 1880 was renamed the Eastman Dry Plate & Film Co. in 1884, the Eastman Co. in 1889, and the Eastman Kodak Co. in 1892.

5. Eastman's paternal grandmother's name was Anne Rundel so probably Morton Rundel was a second cousin. Eastman refers to him only as "a distant relative" which was his catchall term for any relative who was not a first cousin. Rundel was remembered by the Rev. Murray Bartlett, rector of St. Paul's Church as never uttering a word on those Sunday afternoons. While Rundel's 1911 bequests for an art gallery and library was being contested in the courts, Emily Sibley Watson erected the Memorial Art Gallery so that in 1934, when the Rundel Memorial Building was finally started, it was built as mainly a library with one room reserved as a gallery.

6. Terry Ramsaye came to Rochester to interview Eastman for an article appearing in the July 1927 issue of *Photoplay*. The quotes pertaining to breakfast in the conservatory are from that article. Certain other quotes are from recorded interviews conducted in 1940, 1950, or 1954 with Eastman's friends, employees, etc. by a variety of interviewers which are now at the University of Rochester Library. Still other quotes are from the George Eastman correspondence, both incoming and outgoing, at George Eastman House, the University of Rochester Library, and the Eastman Kodak Company.

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Back cover: George Eastman often retreated to his third floor where he had a complete carpenter's workshop as well as a photographer's studio. He liked to "tinker."

