Eastman Commercial College

Sample of currency used in business colleges [3]

Also broadsheet for college, 1854
Eastman Commercial College
Eastman Commercial College
EASTMAN'S
COMMERClAL COLLEGE!
ARCADE, FOURTH FLOOR, ROCHESTER, N.Y.
(ESTABLISHED IN 1823)
RE-OPENS ON MONDAY, NOV. 27, AND CLOSES IN APRIL.

COURSE OF INSTRUCTION.

Commercial Penmanship and Book-keeping, by Double
Entry, as practically used in the different departments of Trade
and Commerce, including Wholesale, Retail, Commission,
Banking, Manufacturing, Shipping and Steamboating, in-
dividual Partnership, and Compounded Company Business.

Students being taught individually can enter at any
time, and the full course is usually completed in from
four to eight weeks.

TERMS.
For Teacher's Course, including Ornamental Penmanship in
all the Ancient and Modern Hands, and Diploma,  $30.00
For Collegiate Course and Diploma,  25.00
For a Course of Lessons in Book-keeping alone,  10.00
For 24 Lessons in Penmanship,  5.00

It is the design of the Collegiate Course to qualify the
pupil to act as Book-keeper in the most extensive and im-
novated establishment.

Grads assisted to suitable situations.

GEO. W. EASTMAN.

Rochester, October, 1854.

New Union Steam Press, Masonic Building.
Note

Ackerman, George Eastman, 1930

Illustration facing page 14 shows two
Eastman College Bank notes

a One Dollar
and a Twenty Dollar
bought his first razor, took his mother out to dinner, indulged a little more in candy and figs, paid twelve dollars for a pair of trousers, and increased his payments for board and his Sunday School offerings. The next year he bought his first technical books, journeyed to Watkins Glen on his twenty-first birthday, bought 'cigars for the boys,' went to the local rifle gallery to learn to shoot, made his first checker board, and paid his first pew rent at Saint Luke's Episcopal Church.

Within these few years the boy had become a man. In April, 1874, he had left the insurance office to become a junior bookkeeper in the Rochester Savings Bank. By the summer of 1876 he was receiving $1,200 a year, and his accounts show that he took over all the household financial responsibilities from his mother, superintended the 'spring cleaning,' purchased new carpets and furnishings, including more pictures and new frames. For a time he had saved $1500, and was then succeeding in business. He bought a small farm and was able to provide for himself and his family.

In the mean time his savings had increased, January 1, 1877, he had $5000 invested in cash on hand. His mother was contented and happy and there was no immediate danger of poverty, but he was unsatisfied. Advancement in insurance and banking, the two careers he had experienced, resembled too much the 'covered wagon' days and not at all the advancing age of machinery. But no one, not even his mother, knew what was going on in his mind.

The summer of 1877 passed without a vacation, which was, in itself, unusual. Horseback riding and croquet games continued and so did the doctor's calls and the
GEORGE EASTMAN

BY

CARL W. ACKERMAN

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

EDWIN R. A. SELIGMAN, LL.D., Ph.D.

And with Illustrations

Boston and New York
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
The Riverside Press Cambridge
1930
Dec. 9, 1948

[Photograph of Eastman's Commercial College Announcement, Oct. 1854]
EASTMAN'S
COMMERCIAL COLLEGE!
ARCADE, FOURTH FLOOR, ROCHESTER, N.Y.
(ESTABLISHED IN 1852)
RE-OPENS ON MONDAY, NOV. 27, AND CLOSES IN APRIL.

COURSE OF INSTRUCTION.

Commercial Penmanship and Bookkeeping, by Trade.

Entry, as practically used in the different departments of Trade
and Commerce, including Wholesale, Retail, Commission,
Banking, Manufacturing, Shipping, and Steamboating, in
individual Partnership, and Company Business.

Students being taught individually or en masse at any
time, and the full course is usually completed in from
three to eight weeks.

TERM.

For Teacher's Course, including Ornamental Penmanship in
all the Ancient and Modern Hands, and Diploma, - $80.00
For Collegiate Course and Diploma, - $60.00
For a Course in Commercial Bookkeeping, alone, - $10.00
For 21 Lessons in Penmanship, - $5.00

It is the design of the Collegiate Course to qualify the
pupil, to act as Bookkeeper in the most extensive and im-
mportant establishments.

12th Graduates assisted to suitable situations.

GEO. W. EASTMAN.

Rochester, October, 1854.

Only three hours from Main Building.
August 7, 1956

Mr. Beaumont Newhall
George Eastman House
900 East Avenue
Rochester, New York

Dear Mr. Newhall:

We have a considerable amount of material on Harvey G. Eastman and I have been hoping for the past few years to assemble much of it in an article for our Dutchess County Historical Society year book, but no time.

It is hard to tell just when "Eastman's Commercial College" (as it was referred to in the newspapers of 1859) opened. The Poughkeepsie Eagle, Oct. 1, 1859, announced:

Another School. Harvey G. Eastman, who has conducted a Commercial College at St. Louis, and also one at Oswego for some time past will open one of these institutions in this city on the 2d of November. From information in our possession we believe Mr. Eastman is fully qualified to conduct a school of this kind in the highest order, and with the favorable location which Poughkeepsie presents, he will without doubt be successful.

Issues of November 12 and 19, mentioned a lecture course open to his pupils and the public (The Hon. Elihu Burnett, Mortimer Thompson, etc.) and a local band. A three-inch advertisement ran in the newspaper from the first of October, addressed to YOUNG MEN, Parents and Guardians and mentioned that courses would be open to both ladies and gentlemen. The issue of November 12, set the opening date as November 24. However, issues after Nov. 24, did not mention any formal opening.

Mr. Eastman was mayor 1871-1874 and was elected again in 1877 and died in office, July 15, 1878, at Denver, Colorado, where he had gone for his health.

We have the newspapers of the time, The Poughkeepsie Daily Eagle, The Poughkeepsie Daily Press, The Poughkeepsie Telegraph and The Sunday Courier. Photostats can be made for you.

Yours very truly,

Local history librarian.
Sanford Seide

3 Crosman Terrace

Rochester 20, N. Y.

Acknowledged receipt of

12/17/63
EASTMAN'S COMMERCIAL COLLEGE

A Research Paper
Presented to
Mrs. Schmidt of the Department of English
Monroe Community College

By
Sanford G. Seide
May 1963
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PREFACE

An interest in the business world and especially a desire to enter the business profession prompted my selecting this subject for research.

In the study of early business education, little credit, if any, is given to the "true forerunner" of American business education, Eastman's Commercial College and its founder, George Washington Eastman.

I have attempted to compile a short, but complete history on our country's first practical business school with the thought that its important position in the field of education now be recognized.

Sources of information which were available included: Monroe Community College Library, Rochester Rundel Library, Rush Rhees Library of the University of Rochester, George Eastman House, Law Library of Monroe County and the Rochester Historical Society House.

Information was scarce and many questions remain unanswered, but I can say that I made and earnest effort to check these points. Since little information was available, and my desire was basically factual, I have followed a predominantly footnoted style in preparing my paper.
George W. Eastman was born in Marshall, N. Y. in 1815. "After leaving the district school, which was located near the family homestead, Mr. Eastman attended for a short time Hamilton Academy, Madison County, and Amenia Seminary at Amenia, Dutchess County. As a boy and young man he showed great aptitude in the use of the pen and when quite young began giving instructions in the art of penmanship, of which he became one of the most proficient and expert masters of the age in which he lived. His success as a teacher of penmanship in the nearby towns, as well at the Seminary at Amenia, opened to him the possibilities of a much greater success and a wider field, by the establishing of a permanent institution in which should be taught, not only the art of penmanship, but that of bookkeeping and the science of accounts."¹

"The building of the Erie Canal and the railroads brought the inhabitants of this northern tier of counties into closer communication, and as trade and industry developed, Rochester, the county seat of Monroe County, became a thriving city by 1840."²

Accompanying this expansion "...the city was calling for men and women trained for its activities,

and both commercial and industrial training courses were devised by venturesome private institutions of a new sort."³

"Two years later, George W. Eastman came to Rochester, founding in this growing community, 'Eastman's Commercial College', the first training school in the country to introduce actual business transactions in its course of studies."⁴

My study has led me to the conclusion that the school opened up primarily as a school of penmanship and expanded into a business school by 1847, then in 1854 named a college.

"Two pieces of paper 'money' used, together with an early circular and the book on penmanship"⁵ indicate the nature of the course of instruction which became the common practice in the "business colleges" of the United States prior to the Civil War. It was "the design of the (Eastman) Collegiate Course to qualify the pupil to act as book-keeper in the most extensive and diversified establishment."⁶

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⁴ Ackerman, p. 4.
⁶ Ackerman, p. 4.
"Notwithstanding the field which he entered was a new one, the venture proved a success, and fully justified the movement in that direction."

"Within two years the business school was firmly established, and George W. Eastman returned to Oneida County to marry Maria Kilbourn."

Disagreement over the family residence now arises between historians. One source reads, "...the Kodak inventor's father did not move his family here from Waterville to the city until 1860." Another source reads, "...she married George W. Eastman, and removed with him to Rochester, N.Y., where they lived for four years. They then removed to Waterville, residing there until 1861, when they returned to Rochester."

With George here and Maria back in Waterville, transportation being quite limited and slow during this era, I don't imagine too close a relationship prevailed. But perhaps I am wrong because they raised three children by 1854.

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7 Rix, p. 803.
8 Ackerman, p. 4.
9 R.H.S., p. 165.
10 Ibid.
The Rochester Directory entries taken from Mr. Beaumont Newhall, director of the George Eastman House appear as follows:

1845-46 Penmanship teacher 18 Arcade Exchange
   res: 22 Clay St. (now Tremont)

1847-48 " " 18 Arcade Exchange 3rd story
   res: 12 Atwater (now Central Ave)

1857 bds at Waverly House

1859 " " " "

1861 10 S. Washington

The latter dates also have a listing for the Eastman Commercial College
"In 1847 he published a work on single and double entry bookkeeping which was the standard work on the science of accounts for many years, and was introduced into the school as a textbook."\(^{11}\) There is a revised copy available in the Rundel Library and several in the Eastman House. I have included a portion of the Preface of the book to relay some of their thoughts to you.

"In October of 1854, Eastman's Commercial College was moved to the fourth floor of the Reynolds Arcade in Rochester, the most important building in the city at the time,\(^{12}\) while the Eastman family residence remained in Waterville."\(^{12}\)

Another author adds "...in 1854 Eastman moved it into more spacious quarters in the Reynolds Arcade and named it the Eastman Commercial College.


\(^{12}\) Ackerman, p. 5.

\(^{12}\) Ackerman, p. 5. The following sequences of study and costs were announced in the circular: Commercial Penmanship and Book-keeping by Double-Entry, as practically used in the different departments of Trade and Commerce, including Wholesale, Retail, Commission, Banking, Manufacturing, Shipping and Steam-Boating, individual Partnership and Compound Business. "Students being taught individually can enter at any time, and the full course is usually completed in from four to eight weeks. For Teacher's Course, including Ornamental Penmanship in all the Ancient and Modern Hands and Diploma: $30. For Collegiate Course and Diploma: $25. For a Course of Lessons in Book-keeping alone: $10. For 24 lessons in Penmanship: $6...Graduates assisted to suitable positions."

\(^{19}\) R.H.S., p. 165.
A puzzling question enters my mind regarding the circular and its date. There is mention of an earlier circular along with the book on penmanship, the date of book being 1848, but details of a circular are not given until the school’s enlargement in ’54. Is this the former circular, or was it issued in 1854?

“Being a man of quick perceptions, he readily saw the need of something more tangible than text-books and manuscripts in preparing young men to enter the counting room as thorough and safe accountants. While working to meet these exigencies he conceived the idea of introducing actual transactions, and putting into daily practice that which had heretofore been only theoretical. Thus in 1856 there was introduced into the Rochester Mercantile College the various departments of banking, forwarding and commission, insurance, brokerage, and jobbing and wholesale houses, thus giving the student, in a few months, practical advantages that in ordinary routine would require years to accomplish.”

Deep in the attic of the Eastman House Mr. Newhall found several ledger and journal books which were actually used in the various departments of the college. Being an accounting student, I flipped through the pages and found myself quickly at home. Although many of the terms are outdated, most of the entries are

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14Rix, p. 804.
quickly understandable.

"Two, and for a time, four academies for boys engaged in lively rivalry during these years (1855–60). Both the Collegiate Institute, conducted by Professor N.B. Benedict, and Myron G. Peck's Academy, later called the East Avenue Collegiate Institute, undertook to prepare their students for college. Each likewise offered instruction in commercial subjects, but in that field George W. Eastman's Commercial College was recognized as preeminent."15

"These private schools relied for success on the stimulus of able and enthusiastic teachers, many of whom preferred to remain free from the political entanglements which threatened those in the public school system. Yet the latter schools, expanded more rapidly, enjoyed as a result a greater opportunity to keep abreast of new trends toward the classification of students and an enrichment of the curriculum. In the field of practical education, however, the private commercial school held the advantage, and the success of Eastman’s Commercial College soon attacked a vigorous rival."16,16–1

During the height of the school’s success, "...his brother, Almon R. moved to Rochester in 1859 to assist in the school’s management, and after George W.’s death

15 R.H.S., p. 38.
in 1862 continued the college until 1871."\textsuperscript{17}

"By 1860, however the college was known throughout many cities along the Great Lakes, and George W. Eastman was able to move his wife and children to the leading commercial city in the Genesee Valley."\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{16-1} News item in the \textit{Rochester Democrat and American}, August 30, 1859. Refers to many private schools in general only.

\textsuperscript{17} R.H.S., p.

\textsuperscript{18} Ackerman, p. 5.
Rochester Democrat & American, June 17, 1859, Vol. XXVII

Educational Notices

G. W. Eastman's
Model Mercantile College
Wamsley's Marble Block
71 Main St, Roch., N. Y.

This is the only Commercial School in the world where Theory and Practice are combined. So perfectly is this accomplished by the extraordinary facilities afforded, that pupils are actually qualified in a few weeks to act as experienced accountants in any establishment.

Great attention is paid to BUSINESS PENMANSHIP. That pernicious system of learning pupils to write by imitating Engraved Copies is entirely repudiated in this Institution.

For particulars call for Circulars.

G. W. Eastman,
President
Rochester Union & Advertiser, April 21, 1860

Eastman Commercial College—This institution is in a most flourishing condition. There have been upwards of two hundred students in attendance during the winter, including a large number from abroad, thirteen states of the Union being represented. Students can enter this institution, as we are informed, at any time, as there is no vacation during the summer. We advise all young men and women wishing to acquire a business education to enter the college at once. Book-keeping &c., &c., pertaining to actual life are here taught to perfection. Mr. E. will be happy to receive calls from ladies and gentlemen at any hour during the day. He assures us it will be no interruption even in business hours. Go and see his school.
Rochester Union & Advertiser, Feb. 19, 1862

Eastman's College——We notice that Mr. Farrar has introduced to the Senate a bill to incorporate Eastman's Model School and College in this city.
In attempting to investigate the outcome of the bill, I came to a dead end. My first check was in the Journal of the Senate of the State of New York, 35th Session, 1862, p. 174. Here it is mentioned that the bill was read twice and referred to the Committee on Literature. Next, I checked through the Journals of '63 and '64 under Education, Schools, Corporations, and Eastman, but no mention was given here. My last resorts were in the Law Library of Monroe County and the County Clerk's Office. Laws of New York for each year from 1862 through 1871 were checked for listings under Eastman, but nothing appeared. In the County Clerk's Office I checked the Index to Dockets of Incorporation, Vol. 1, 1821-1928. This is a listing of all certificates of incorporation which brought my investigation to a frustrating end. With some feeling of accomplishment I have decided to believe that a charter did not exist. Perhaps this was not an exception or uncommon in these early days of education. One question which still remains in my mind is that mention of incorporation or charter was not brought up until this late date.
Rochester Daily Union & Advertiser, April 23, 1862

Death of Geo. W. Eastman.—The announcement that Geo. W. Eastman is dead, will not surprise any one who has known him intimately for a year past. He has been in a condition that rendered him liable to die at almost any moment for months. He was attacked with a brain disorder on Friday and expired on Sunday morning.

Deceased for many years conducted a writing school with great success, and in the latter years of his life the principal of a Commercial College which has been a very successful and useful institution. It must have been thoroughly systematized or it could not have sustained the past year, while Mr. Eastman was much of the time incapacitated for its management.

Mr. Eastman was a native of Marshall, Oneida County, and died at the age of 47 years. There will be no funeral here, but his remains will be taken to Water-vill, Oneida County, for interment, and the funeral will be there.
CONCLUSION

After George's death in 1862 the College's publicity seems to have decreased to almost zero. I have not been able to find mention of the College, except for the enclosed newspaper articles, in its last years.

During this time, George's cousin, Harvey G. Eastman, who earlier had taught at the Eastman Commercial College, had opened the Eastman's National Business College in Poughkeepsie, N. Y., which was experiencing a rapid increase in student enrollment and a height of 1,700 by 1865. 19

With this I bring to a conclusion my investigation of George W. Eastman and his Eastman's Commercial College...

"To him belongs the honor of founding the school which is the prototype of similar schools of the present day." 20

20 Bix, p. 804.
Rochester Union & Advertiser, Feb. 13, 1864

THE EASTMAN COMMERCIAL COLLEGE—Old city residents need not be reminded as to whom or informed by whose ingenious and driving energy, the entire plan of systematic business education took its rise, or in whose hands it has recieved, through favorable appreciation the people of twelve of the thirty-one States, its present full development and its notable success. It must now, some twenty years since the late G. W. Eastman commenced what may be termed his mission among us. With his then acknowledged talent for instruction, and an early and persistent aim at excellence, it would be somewhat strange if that gentleman had not introduced some valuable improvements, in methods of commercial schooling, or enlarged its scope and consequent utility. He did both. With the assistance of his brother, at that time a man of long and varied experience in business, he invented and instituted a new ritual of accounts, and produced from the fertile precincts of his active brain the original expedient of practical business transactions in connection with theoretical book-keeping and business lectures. With infinite care and study he expanded and improved the new system, perfected its details and applied its principles to the exptent of launching out upon the mercantile world thousands of young experts,
not amateurs, competent in any and every clerically duty known to trade or commerce.

We are pleased to note that the Eastman's College, notwithstanding the loss of its projector and Presidents, goes on its way triumphantly under the auspices of Professor A. B. Eastman, to whom we have alluded. To give such of our readers as have not yet availed themselves of the general invitation to visit and inspect the halls and rooms a passing idea of this celebrated institution, we are at a loss for a better descriptive form of expression than this. The school appeared to our perceptions not to be at all a school, but rather a business world, or at least a city in miniature. The operations of merchandising, jobbing, forwarding, banking, &c., as carried on incessantly there, do not seem essentially different from similar transactions in our streets and counting rooms. The Merchants' Exchange of New York of London presents its array of the same eager and calculating, or thoughtful faces, rather more wrinkled and bearded, it is true, but scarcely more earnest or astute; business at Eastman's is as much business, as business in Broad, Wall, or Third, or Chestnut Streets; sales, shipments, transfers, insurances, remittances and collections are managed and effected precisely as in the outer world—perhaps with even more scrupulous exactness, by express, by telegraph, through the college bank or
exchange office, at the emporium of merchandise, the railroad depot, on the steamboat levee, the exchange or the counting room, the interview, or the confidential note.

Every student receives his own cash capital, and is started at once into real life as it were, by being put into some branch of business. As soon as he is perfect in one department he is removed to another, until practically familiar with all.

The system is admirable, its conception happy, and its execution at Eastman's perfect in generality and detail. But its operation must be witnessed to be appreciated; and we say no more, except to congratulate the public and the pupils of the school on the acquisition of a new instructor of known ability in the operating Telegraph Department, Mr. George A. Stearne, long and favorable known as a first class operator and an enthusiastic teacher of his art.
Rochester Union & Advertiser, Feb. 6, 1866.

The College Party—The party by the students of Eastman's Commercial College last night was largely attended. It was a fine gathering of ladies and gentlemen, who enjoyed the affair very much. The students of this college are shown that they can get up nice social parties to make the winter evenings pass pleasantly as well as do anything else that is worthy of their enterprise.

Rochester Union & Advertiser, March 17, 1866.

Penmanship—The services of Prof. Eugene Burnett have been secured at Eastman's Commercial College, as teacher of plain and ornamental penmanship. Prof. B. is an enthusiastic in his profession, and is an excellent teacher. A class for young ladies will be formed on Monday, the 19th last, to meet and 3 1/2 P.M. at the College Rooms.
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Rochester Union & Advertiser, April 21, 1860.

Rochester Union & Advertiser, February 19, 1862.

Rochester Union & Advertiser, April 29, 1862.

Rochester Union & Advertiser, February 18, 1864.

Rochester Union & Advertiser, February 6, 1866.

Rochester Union & Advertiser, March 17, 1868.

PREFACE

BOOK-KEEPING is a mercantile term, used to denote the method of keeping accounts of all kinds, in such a manner that a person may at any time know the true state of his affairs.

Book-keeping should be more extensively taught in our schools. Among the many books already published on this subject, none are well adapted to, and very few, if any, are intended for the use of common schools. Hence, this important study is almost entirely neglected by those who attend such schools only, and pursued by but few who attend those of a higher grade.

...Book-keeping is one of the most important branches of study that can be pursued by those of suitable age and attainments in our schools of every grade. It is a highly important branch of female education, and should be ranked next in the course of study, and next in importance to reading, writing, and arithmetic. As well might a person postpone the study of arithmetic until he has occasion to cast the interest on a note, or to use a knowledge of figures for any other purpose, as to defer the study of Book-keeping till he has the
cares of actual business on his mind.

In fact, while the pupil is pursuing this study, he is applying the principles of arithmetic in a most practical manner. He is gaining discipline of mind—as much, at least, as by any other study. He is learning to spell the names of a great many articles in commerce, which would not otherwise come under his notice. He is, or may be, improving his style of penmanship, especially when, as in this work, all the items, which he is required to copy, are printed in a beautiful script type. By taking such a view of the subject, we are led unhesitatingly to assert, that the school-room is the place to study book-keeping; and, with a suitable teacher and textbook, a thorough knowledge of it can be obtained there.

Such a text-book the Authors confidently believe they now submit to the public...