

BURLEY

Interview with Mr. Charles W. Burley,
Assistant Manager, Kodak Park

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Mr. Burley came to Rochester in 1909 with Mr. M.A. Youck, president of the Artura Paper Company of Columbus, Ohio, to discuss the purchase of that company by Eastman Kodak Company. Mr. Eastman felt Artura had taken over much of the market he had built, through ~~his~~ advertising and salesmanship, after he acquired the Aristotype Company of Jamestown, in 1901. The Aristo paper was a printing-out paper, and it gradually gave way to developing-out paper such as made by the Artura Company (under the trade name "Iris".) Printing-out paper needed less light, it had higher speed, and it was not dependent upon weather (paper of the sort made by Aristo could be developed only in sunlight.)

Mr. Eastman needed Artura as a source of supply for raw stock for this developing-out paper and wanted Artura to be associated with him so that both could serve the increasing market for developing-out papers, rather than competing wastefully for it. When printing-out papers declined in vogue and obsoleted the plant at Jamestown, N.Y., the people employed there were all brought to Rochester (in 1912) and given employment by Mr. Eastman.

When Artura became a division of Eastman Kodak Company and brought men, machinery and water (for chemical purposes) here from Columbus, Mr. Eastman promised them everything useful and helpful to put out a better product, if possible, than they had been producing. Mr. Burley was given charge of one of the production

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buildings at Kodak Park.

Mr. Eastman did not want his employees to have interests which might conflict with their work for him. He had a bookkeeper, Frank M. Mosher, at Kodak Office and thought him very efficient (and he should have been a good judge, for he had himself been a bank bookkeeper.) This was in the early 'nineties when bicycles were popular and Frank had been elected president of the Associated Bicycle Clubs of Monroe County. News of his election appeared in the papers and came to Mr. Eastman's attention. Mr. Eastman went to Frank and said "I understand you have been elected president of the Associated Bicycle Clubs of Monroe County." Frank admitted he had been. Mr. Eastman continued "I may as well tell you, I wish you wouldn't do that again. I don't like to have persons working for me engage in outside interests." Frank, who was independent in his attitude, said "Too bad, Mr. Eastman, because I feel as long as I do my work in a satisfactory manner during the day, my time after that is my own."

Mr. Eastman said "That is true, but you just can't do your work as it should be done during the day if you have interests that take your time and energy at night. That is what this 'cycling club would do. When your office in it runs out, I wish you wouldn't take it again." Frank replied "If that is the way you feel, we may as well part right now." He left Eastman Kodak Company, although there was no hard feeling on his part or on Mr. Eastman's. They were both men of independent natures and, under the circumstances, it was the only thing to do.

Mr. Eastman might have been "stubborn," but he always tried to be fair. An instance of his fairness was shown in the transfer of the Century Camera Company, of Rochester, to Eastman Kodak Company, in 1901 or 1902. Mr. Eastman had planned a trip to England and before the transfer was completed and full payment had been made, he went abroad. Mr. Gilbert E. Mosher, of Century Camera Company, and his partners Mr. Walmsley and Mr. Pritchard, after Mr. Eastman had been gone several months, decided they were entitled to interest on the unpaid amount due the company. When Mr. Eastman returned, Mr. Mosher reminded him of the unpaid sum and stated his belief that the Century Camera Company should receive interest on it. Mr. Eastman admitted "You're right, Mr. Mosher, it was careless of me not to think of it. You're entitled to interest on your money over the period you mention." Mr. Eastman paid the balance due, and also 6% interest on it.

Mr. Burley told a story which showed how Mr. Eastman, in lighter mood, took a sporting chance and won out in a small matter. It was during prohibition times, and Mr. Eastman and a group of men were enroute by train from a Kodak meeting at Ottawa. When they left Ottawa, some of his companions put bottles of liquor in their grips, and others attempted to conceal them from the customs officers who were to come aboard a little above Malone, N.Y. While Mr. Eastman and the others were in the dining car, the customs men went through their belongings in their compartments, and found the bottles

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of liquor. When they returned from the dining car, Mr. Eastman's bottle remained on the seat where he left it and the others wondered why it was still there. He explained that before he went to the dining car he had fastened a five dollar bill, with a rubber band, about the bottle. He felt the customs men were sporting enough to take the money or the whiskey, but not both, and his belief was vindicated.

One of Mr. Eastman's pet phrases was "What's new? Got anything new?" This was not a cliché, but it reflected his keen interest in developing new products and processes. He never seemed to lose the enthusiasm of his early days as a photographic amateur, and when new things came out for amateurs he was particularly interested. (He probably felt that from the ranks of the amateurs would come many men to build the photographic industry and art of the future.)

He retained his interest in new products and processes until the very end. He visited Kodak Park, on the Friday before he died, to see a new duplex paper-making machine for producing film wrapping paper. This machine ~~promised to~~ made paper, from improved material, that, because of its inertness, would not produce mottling, spots, or fog on film. It would do this at less expense than had been incurred previously. Mr. Eastman's automobile was driven to the door of the mill where this machine was installed, and he came into the plant. He was so feeble that after he had walked a little way around the machine he said "You will have to take me back. I can't go any further." They helped him to a balcony overlooking the machine, where he sat for an hour or more with Mr. A.F. Sulzer and Mr. Burley,

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who explained the new machine and told what it would do for roll film. They told Mr. Eastman it would save on production cost of roll wrapping paper, which they formerly had obtained outside the company, and they could pay for the new machinery and plant in three years. He said in his quiet, deliberate manner "That is what I call a good business deal," for he felt that, technically and financially, it was a good move.

Eastman Kodak Company, and other American photographic supply companies, until the World War, had been dependent upon Europe for paper, gelatines, and chemicals. Today all of these materials, which Eastman Kodak Company uses, are manufactured at Kodak Park, due to Mr. Eastman's determination to make the industry self-sustaining and able to carry on without interference or degrading of the quality of the product in case of foreign disturbances. (If the raw material situation were the same in the present war as in the last, Eastman Kodak Company could not carry on its business without interruption.) Mr. Eastman aimed to make a photographic paper equal to the German or French paper, and he succeeded in making a better paper, from a new type of fiber or pulp, and a new material for sizing. He aimed to make a gelatine as good as the German, French, Dutch or English, and succeeded in making a better gelatine.

He made American industrial, university and other research laboratories independent from Europe for their supply of rare synthetic chemicals. He engaged Dr. Hans Clarke, with Mr. William Webb as his assistant, to build up a Synthetic Chemistry Department as a branch of Kodak Research Laboratories (now Kodak Park West, formed 1918.)

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This Department now produces four or five thousand rare chemicals,
most of which are available to all users, although a few rare dyes
are used only by Eastman Kodak Company itself.

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