Interview with T.J. Craig
Manager of Service Dept.

Mr. Craig began his career in the Eastman Kodak Company office on September 9, 1895 at the age of 16. It was his first real job although he had carried newspapers, and during one summer vacation had worked in a Rochester shoe factory. Four dollars a week was his starting salary and at that time book-keepers were getting eight dollars. As for hours, 60 hours was the standard week to say nothing of extra night work which might add 15 more to the weekly total.

However, hours meant even less to "the boss" than to his faithful helpers for Mr. Craig recalls that sometimes when "the help" were quitting late in the evening Mr. Eastman would come back to do some more work. Mr. Eastman was a "driver" in his early, dynamic days although he became less strenuous in later years and then would enjoy having people come up to his office and just chat with him. This mellowing of character with the passage of time was also indicated in Mr. Eastman's correspondence for his early epistles were of almost telegraphic curtness, while in course of time they were expanded and given more warmth.

Mr. Eastman's mother was well liked by the organization but she did not encourage familiarity. She didn't "let down" when one went out to speak with her in her carriage when she came to the office every afternoon to take Mr. Eastman home. Her favorite among the employees seemed to be Charlie Johnson.

Mr. Eastman's ambition for his mother apparently was to have her keep up appearances with Mrs. Kimball whose family had made money.
in the tobacco business and who was leader of the Rochester social set in the Gay Nineties. Mr. Eastman bought his mother a carriage and a span of spirited horses, and engaged a coachman. One day the horses--coachman and all--ran away. After that he wouldn't let his mother use them.

At the time that Mr. Craig was engaged Mr. Eastman was in Europe. Colonel Strong--big, hale, and white-whiskered--had just returned, broke, from his banking venture in Seattle and held the post of Office Manager. Mr. Craig had the boyish idea that as Mr. Eastman was the boss he would be older than Mr. Strong and was much surprised on his first contact when he found that Mr. Eastman looked so young. Except for his early greying hair, Mr. Eastman remained a youthful appearance rather longer than most men.

Mr. Eastman was not above a little quiet "kidding". He early sensed that Mr. Craig hated to be called "Tommie." Often when he passed in the office to see Miss Whitney Mr. Craig would say "Good morning, Mr. Eastman" and the latter would respond "Good morning, Tommie." Then Mr. Craig could see his shoulders shake with repressed mirth. However, if strangers were there Mr. Eastman's reply would be "Good morning, Mr. Craig."

One day it chanced that Mr. Craig was looking through some photographs of Mr. Eastman being shown him by Miss Whitney and he expressed his desire for an autographed one. He disliked making a direct request of this to Mr. Eastman but the news was relayed and very soon thereafter a box with a fancy wrapping and ribbon came down addressed to "Tommie." The autographed photo which the box contained still hangs in Mr. Craig's office.
Mr. Eastman was the sort of man that people found "hard to understand." Some stood in awe of him because his essential humanness was not of the obvious sort. Perhaps two factors account for this. Like many another great man Mr. Eastman was basically "shy" and sensitive. Also, as his wealth increased he was followed by those who sought to use him for selfish ends. As a defense against these self-seekers he developed the habit of analyzing people to find their objectives. Persons he trusted could have his ear at any time. His shyness and efforts at self-protection, unfortunately, built a wall about his inner life which to some extent imprisoned his personality and which shut in much of the warmth of heart that he naturally possessed.

The fear which even some of the older employees felt for "G.E." was to a slight extent based upon fact. This was probably because Mr. Eastman in his more active years did not mince words, and when he wanted to register disapproval he could do it in no uncertain terms. Mr. Craig recalls that Mr. Eastman had an extensive vocabulary and on occasion he put it to full use in cursing "a wide blue streak." After the "bawling out" had occurred the storm was over, as far as Mr. Eastman was concerned, for he was always willing to forgive and forget.

Mr. Craig in his line of duty had considerable adjusting to do by correspondence and he received valuable training in this art under Mr. Eastman. The latter would ask Mr. Craig "What's the story on this deal?" and Mr. Craig would tell him and then would write the adjustment letter as he conceived Mr. Eastman would write it. Mr. Eastman would go over it with his green pencil and say "I think this would be better." A proud moment in Mr. Craig's life was when
Mr. Eastman sent him a brief note of commendation on a letter which the former had sent out: "This letter is perfect for handling matters of this sort. Please show it to all the correspondents."

The fellows used to fear that Miss Whitney might see and hear things she shouldn't and then carry tales back to Mr. Eastman. Mr. Craig said he assured him that "mum" was her watchword. Once she discovered some of the boys enjoying a pitcher of beer in the cellar. For a long time afterward, much to her amusement, they treated her with unusual deference to forestall her telling on them.

An example of Mr. Eastman's well-known aversion to whistling occurred when Mr. Craig was apparently alone in the office, although Jim Sprague was in the safe vault. Mr. Eastman came into the room and said "Stop that whistling, Tom." Mr. Craig cheerfully replied "All right, Mr. Eastman." Jim overheard and the whistling stopped.

Mr. Eastman bore no resentment for small offenses if the person who committed them was honest about confessing. Mischief occasionally flourished in the office and if Mr. Eastman didn't like it the conversation would run something like this:

"Tommy, did you do this?"
"Yes, Sir."
"Was that the right thing to do?"
"No. I guess it wasn't."
"Well, why did you do it?"
"Just for fun."
"Well, don't do it again." And that ended the matter.

Craig, T.J.
The billing clerk, Joe Buckley, was far from being as cool-headed as Mr. Eastman. One day this red-headed Irishman's hat became misplaced. After a short but hectic search when he wanted to go home that night Joe shot up to Mr. Eastman's office with the enraged declaration:

"Mr. Eastman, someone swiped my hat!"

Mr. Eastman had seen far more discouraging events in life than a misplaced hat, so after he had successfully banished a desire to laugh he generously waved to the hook on which his own was hanging. "Oh, that's too bad. Take mine."

Absolute honesty was what Mr. Eastman gave, and it was what he expected in return. In personal relations he became very keen in picking sincere persons from fakers. In customer relations he never dodged an issue although sometimes it was necessary to make adjustments on the basis of goodwill. The policies which Mr. Eastman initiated have been passed on to various young trainees that have entered the company and his influence spreads in an ever-widening stream.

Mr. Craig never heard Mr. Eastman speak of his father. His two loves appeared to be his mother and his business. Mr. Eastman was probably too old when his mother died to form an equivalent affection for another woman. A pleasant incident, Mr. Craig recalls, was when Mrs. Eastman and Mrs. Strong together with George Eastman and Mr. Strong entered the office with Hawaiian leis about their necks upon returning from a trip to Honolulu.
Mr. Craig found that Mr. Eastman as the years went by tended to rely upon the older men he had known personally rather than upon their no-doubt efficient subordinates. Mr. Craig, for instance, was often requested to entertain various persons who were visiting Rochester.

One of Mr. Eastman's house guests, said Mr. Craig, was quite an excellent organist and was eager to try the Eastman residence organ. Mr. Eastman confessed afterwards that an unexplained delay in granting his visitor's wish was that he "didn't know how to turn on the juice" to start the organ. Someone was found to do this, however, and both guest and host were soon enjoying excellent music.

Mr. Eastman was a member of St. Paul's Episcopal Church although he very seldom was an attender. He was tolerant of religious views in others although he was not in accord with many individual tenets. Through the fact that Catholic church property (a cathedral) abutted the Eastman plant on State Street, and a Catholic cemetery adjoined property of Kodak Park, Mr. Eastman found common interest with Bishop McGuade. The Bishop had a shrewd business head in addition to his humanitarian qualities and it was a common sight to view the Bishop and the Kodak King strolling arm in arm up and down State Street. Bishop McGuade was the only person, aside from his mother, that Mr. Eastman regularly met at the door on arrival and escorted there on departure.

In the early days of Kodacolor some views were made on the visit of Cardinal Hayes to Rochester. Mr. Craig went to New York
to project the scenes for the Cardinal’s criticism and also to present him with a machine and a projector. The Cardinal was deeply appreciative of the gift and exclaimed of the pictures: "I think these are the finest pictures that have ever been made of me. The colors in my robe are reproduced perfectly." Upon Mr. Craig's return he found Mr. Eastman terribly upset about a fire which had occurred in a Cleveland hospital as the result of an explosion of X-ray film. Hearing of the Cardinal's expression of pleasure helped to divert his mind from worry that the film had caused the disaster.

After the declaration of the first Kodak Wage Dividend in 1919 Mr. Eastman was curious to know to what used the money had been put. Mr. Craig noted his delight when told of a case of a cleaning-woman who had bought a new screen door and other domestic necessities.

During a Red Cross Drive a story came to Mr. Eastman of a widow who had contributed $1.00. Mr. Eastman's comment was: "All I can give is money and it doesn't mean a thing. That woman's dollar means a lot more than the thousands I can give."

Mr. Eastman was once shown movies of the Prince of Wales accepting the gift of a dental clinic for London and Mr. Craig posed the question: "I wonder if it's appreciated?"

"What do you mean?" retorted Mr. Eastman.

"If someone comes over from America and does a thing like that for them, why don't their own people do it? They have wealthy persons there."

Craig, T.J.
Said Mr. Eastman, "Tom, those people can't do it. While they are"minded"people they are "land poor." Some of them are supporting whole counties. If we don't do this work, no one will." And I feel this is going to be one means of bringing the two countries closer together in friendship."

Mr. Eastman's interest in clinics was largely stimulated by Dr. Burkhart, who was a good "salesman." Mr. Craig recalls public tonsillectomy work done by Mr. Eastman before founding of the Rochester Dental Dispensary. A temporary hospital was set up in Convention Hall and 7000 children were operated upon. About 190 were brought in at 4 P.M. and after having supper were put to bed. In the morning four of them at a time were anesthetized, operated upon and put back to bed. Coming out of the ether, at lunch time they were fed ice cream. At four o'clock taxis would take them home and a new group would come in—all under the supervision of Welfare workers. The doctor had a record of operating on one case every six minutes. Only one child was lost. That one had diphtheria and was not operated upon.

During the World War Mr. Eastman would drop everything to do something for the boys in service. When told that it would take movie §4500 to make some scenes of home to send to lonesome Rochester boys in camp or on the sea, he promptly replied "That's all right. Go ahead, and send the bill to me." Mr. Eastman built a bath-house for the use of soldiers passing through Rochester and he saw to it that colored troops as well as white shared its advantages.
On the fiftieth anniversary of Mr. Eastman's connection with Kodak, Mr. Craig prepared a book of photographs covering company history. These pictures showed the progress of buildings and also the faces of employees from the earliest days. Mr. Eastman almost wept when he opened it after its presentation to him. "I've had a lot of things given to me in my life," he said, "but I don't know of anything that has given me so much pleasure as this book."

A testimonial plaque was presented to Mr. Eastman at the same time. Later his permission was obtained to place the plaque in the entry hall of Kodak office. "You may take the plaque, but not the book!" Mr. Eastman said.

In closing, Mr. Craig pensiveley thumbed over a list of employees who have been with Eastman Kodak Company for as long as fifty years. He read off name after name of men who had begun in humble capacities and have risen in position—some to high executive places. "Eastman Kodak doesn't need to go outside its own family when it has a better position to be filled" he pointed out. "Just look at all those who have risen from the ranks within the organization."

"Have you ever considered possibilities in other fields for yourself?" I inquired. "Never seriously," Mr. Craig answered. "As for the reason, I've never stopped to think about it. I guess its just because I've been too happy here to even want to go elsewhere."

-- H. N.

Craig, T.J.