

Interview with Wm. W. Day,
2695 East Avenue,
Brighton

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don't send DAY ✓

Mr. Day finished grammar school in 1884 and then attended the Rochester Business University (now the Rochester Business Institute) for one year. He lived with his grandfather who, one spring morning in 1886, called his attention to a "Help Wanted" advertisement in the morning newspaper. An office boy was wanted at the Eastman Dry Plate Company, 343 State Street.

Mr. Day hurried to the Eastman office and was "lined up" with twenty or more other boys who wanted the position. Mr. Eastman stood at his high desk in the corner of a large open office. He interviewed each boy in turn and he gave a test to the more "likely" ones. The test consisted of writing a sentence or two from copy and making several calculations in arithmetic. Mr. Day was one of those who were satisfactory in the two tests and he was asked to report with the several other boys at 1 o'clock that afternoon when Mr. Eastman would tell them his decision. When Mr. Day's turn came for the second interview Mr. Eastman asked him "Do you want a permanent job or just a vacation job?" He promptly replied "I want a permanent job, Mr. Eastman." To the question "When can you start?" he replied "Right away." Mr. Eastman concluded "You come in tomorrow morning at 7 o'clock and you can start then." The other boys were excused.

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At that time George Deming was Office Manager, Cashier and Bookkeeper. Mr. Eastman, Mr. Deming, and Mr. Day for several years were the only employees in the office. Mr. Eastman's high, flat desk (there were no roll-top desks in the office when Mr. Day started work) was in the corner of the room. Mr. Day received a starting salary of \$5.00 a week for filing, copying letters in the letter-press book, and running errands. In two or three years he was promoted to writing orders, which he entered in a large book. Later his duty was to write invoices. Still later he was given charge of the sales-record book.

In the late 'eighties Eastman Dry Plate Company made dry plates, negative paper, and roll holders. Roll-holders (which took the place of plate holders) were used in the heavy View Cameras, which were used on a tripod and which were equipped with a curtain to cover the operator's head when he focussed. ^{camera was} Negative paper was oiled with ^{was} vaseline after development and the image, thus made translucent, was printed. With American film (1884) which was an improvement on negative paper, the gelatine which contained the image, after development was transferred to glass and prints were made from the glass plate. At about that time the slogan was coined and placed on a sign across the front of the Eastman building "You press the button and we do the rest." This slogan was pertinent because it was difficult for an amateur photographer to strip the gelatine after exposure and transfer it to a glass plate. Transparent film was brought out in 1889 which required no transferring as it could be printed directly. With transparent film the amateur, with a little training, could "do the rest" for himself. By then Mr. Eastman had completed his plans for a conveniently portable camera. One day he came into the office and said

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"Well, I have something now which is going to use up the film." Mr. Eastman had the Kodak in mind when he said that.

Mr. Day stated that experimentation flourished in the Eastman organization long before "laboratories" were the accepted thing. Frank Brownell and two or three of his men constituted the "Experimental Department" before Brownell became an employee of the Eastman Kodak Company and the work of the department was continued. For development work on transparent film, space was rented in a building ^{at} Court and Stone Streets. The first highly-trained technical man employed by Eastman Kodak Company was Darragh de Lancey, a graduate of M.I.T. DeLancey was placed in charge of the manufacturing of sensitized goods at Kodak Park. He was the first manager of Kodak Park.

Mr. Day spoke of the long working hours of those days-- 7 o'clock in the morning until 6 o'clock in the afternoon, with no Saturday holiday and no extra pay for overtime (eventually the men who worked evenings were given 25¢ for supper.) Mr. Day and Mr. Deming worked four or five evenings a week for nearly ten years until an increased staff in the office relieved them of some of their duties.

Mr. Eastman did not work in the office at night but he undoubtedly worked on experiments at home. Mr. Eastman was "all business" and he did not even attend company picnics in the early days, While Mr. Eastman did not engage in sports he kept himself fit by taking Turkish baths. Mr. Eastman and Mr. Henry Strong frequently went together to Barden's Turkish Baths on Fitzhugh Street, North. One man called the other on the telephone at the close of business

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(Mr. Strong was then president of the Woodbury Whip Company on Allen Street) and asked "Are you ready?" Then they both started out and arrived at Barden's at about the same time. The two men went to the Turkish Bath together once or twice a week over a period of several years. Mr. Day said that later when Mr. Strong was associated with Eastman Kodak Company he came and went at will and did not give his full time to the business.

When work became more pressing because of increased business Mr. Eastman hired an assistant, Clarence Williams, to help him with correspondence and with other office routine. After a partition was built around Mr. Eastman's desk in the corner, to make a private office, Mr. Williams was given space in it. When the staff became larger Mr. ^{Laurence} Florence Glasser, who later was made a Superintendent, sat at his high desk near the entrance door to "check in" employees as they entered in the morning.

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