

DUMONT

Interview with John E. Dumont,
16 Russell Street

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Mr. Dumont is now 82, and is one of the oldest living persons who knew George Eastman. He became interested in photography in the early 'eighties and was one of the "leading amateurs in photography" mentioned in an article by that title which appeared in the Cosmopolitan magazine in February, 1892. One of his photographs entitled "Listening to the Birds" shows a group of boys and girls in the woods listening to an unseen songster of the forest. This photograph, which was charming in subject and simple in its arrangement, without appearance of posing, took a prize at the Vienna Salon, 1891. Mr. Dumont won other prizes in amateur photographic contests in the United States.

Interest in photography drew Mr. Dumont to visit the plant of Eastman Kodak Company where he met George Eastman, who showed him about the works and let him come in and inspect processes whenever he wished. Mr. Dumont believes an aunt of Mr. Eastman made emulsions in the very early days.

Mr. Eastman occasionally took Mr. Dumont for drives in his carriage or car and invited him to lunch at his home. Mr. Eastman usually conversed about ideas rather than people. Current events were a frequent topic and, as a rule, the events were those of local importance.

Dumont, John E.

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Mr. Dumont says Mr. Eastman was interested in flowers in the very early days of their acquaintance and, apparently, this was a lifelong natural trait. Mr. Dumont liked flowers and had a garden at his home, in which were varieties of delphinium, including one which he was breeding. Mr. Eastman liked color and he had an idea for giving a greater variety of color to his garden. He wanted to get a balance of red and blue in his garden and he inquired of Mr. Dumont if there was any way of getting the delphinium (early blooming) and the hollyhock (later blooming) to grow at the same time. Mr. Dumont suggested he cut the delphinium and see if it grew again at about the same time the hollyhocks did. Mr. Eastman always liked to experiment to obtain what he wanted and he tried this scheme, but he found the delphinium did not grow again the same season. } - ?

Mr. Eastman had a wide variety of flowers in his garden and, although he enjoyed their beauty and fragrance, he did not work on them a great deal. The gardener did that. He had a number of poinsettias in his greenhouse and these were in bloom around Christmas and he decorated his house with them in season.

Mr. Eastman was patriotic and admired men who served their country. When the Ninth Infantry returned from the Phillipine Islands, after the Spanish American war, Mr. Dumont arranged a reception for its officers at the Genessee Valley Club and went to Mr. Eastman for a contribution toward expenses. He gladly gave the \$50.00 requested of him and said if more were wanted he would gladly give it.

Dumont, John E.

Mr. Eastman was chairman of the Rochester Red Cross during the World War and he sent Mr. Dumont to the Canteen at the New York Central station to administer it. Mr. Eastman had a bath-house built back of the station where soldiers who came through could clean up after a dusty journey, and he gave charge of this, also, to Mr. Dumont. Mr. Eastman was an extremely clean, neat person and he knew the value to morale and health of keeping clean. Mr. Dumont noted the effect of war on the hardening of men and says about 40,000 availed themselves of the bathhouse on the way to camp, but when they came back eighteen months later, relatively few cared whether they bathed frequently or not until they became re-adjusted to civilian life.

George Eastman was considered a reticent person. Perhaps he was not this so much as a particular person who liked to exercise choice in picking his friends. Not all of the many persons he met in his numerous activities could be good friends and he knew it. He was pleasant to persons he liked, and he spoke calmly and quietly. He told a joke occasionally and he liked to hear other persons tell funny stories. Persons, knowing who he was, sometimes catered to him and, even if he didn't show resentment he obviously didn't enjoy it.

Mr. Eastman dressed quietly as a rule and had his clothes made by Wm. A. Stace, 82 State St. (later 29 State St.) He sometimes found it more convenient to pay for clothes--and, Mr. Dumont believes, for other things-- in Eastman Kodak stock rather than in cash. Mr. Stace, through appreciation of Eastman stock and through wise investment in other securities, had an estate of nearly half a million dollars before he died.

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*read by Dumont &
returned to Oakes* ✓ **DUMONT**

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