

*note
↓ for card
pictures*

Interview with James Evanoff,
Testing Department,
Kodak Park

EVANOFF
not sent ✓

2 / 2 6 / 4 0

Mr. Evanoff came from Europe in 1891 after leaving the employ of Gunn and Stewart, "Photographers to Her Majesty," Richmond, England. He came to Montreal as an "operator," as portrait photographers were called then, with Wm. Notman Photographic Company which had the largest studios in Canada and he remained there for three years. Then he went to New York City to open a studio for Notman Company at 42nd Street and Madison Avenue. He made portrait photographs (among them one of Chauncey Depew) and he did "composition" work, or the reduction of a number of portrait photographs to uniform size for placement in a "synthetic" group. When finished, the group picture looked as if the persons had been photographed together. Mr. Evanoff's composition groups included Richard Croker and other Tammany chieftains; New York Police Sergeants; and Metropolitan Life Insurance Company officers. (When Mr. Evanoff went to Boston, later, he composed the Massachusetts Senate, and 1100 or 1200 members of the G.A.R.)

Notman Company in New York City sold photographic products (including those of Eastman Kodak Company) to professional photographers and to the comparatively few amateurs of the time. Mr. Eastman went to the Notman store in the mid-nineties and bought copyrighted negatives of studies made by Mr. Evanoff of reaping and harvesting scenes and of semi-draped figures. (The negatives were printed on Solio paper and these photographs were distributed widely to advertise the paper. They were printed at State Street by Mr. Simon V. Haus, who later became manager of Eastman Kodak Co. in London.

*wsm
Full*

Kodak Works at Horeow

Evanoff, James

2

After he had made his selection of negatives Mr. Eastman took Mr. Evanoff to dinner at the Murray Hill Hotel on Park Avenue. Mr. Evanoff said Mr. Eastman was a fluent talker, at least on the subject of photography. Mr. Eastman knew dry plates and Mr. Evanoff knew wet plates so they enjoyed "comparing notes."

Mr. Evanoff met Mr. Eastman in Rochester years later in 1909 when Mr. Evanoff was vice-president and secretary of the Photographers Association of America. It was the only time that the Association held its annual convention in Rochester. Mr. Evanoff stopped in Mr. Eastman's office and, among other matters, they discussed photographic processes. Mr. Eastman went to a cabinet and brought out a few daguerrotypes of his father and mother. He spoke of the oxidation to which the pictures were subject. Mr. Evanoff told Mr. Eastman the darkened area could be lightened and he said the daguerrotypes should then be sealed in glass to make them airtight and safe against further oxidation.

Mr. Eastman made one of his few public speeches in July, 1909, at the Convention of the Photographer's Association of America. A marquee was erected at Kodak Park and a luncheon was given there in the afternoon. In the evening the convention members went to Ontario Beach Park and during the program George Eastman made a brief speech. He welcomed the guests to the city and spoke optimistically of the progress of the photographic art and of its future prospects.

After Mr. Evanoff left Notman Company in New York City he went to Boston. Then he went to California with another photographic concern. He returned to Boston and then conducted his own studio in Salem, Massachusetts. In 1910, after negotiations, he started to work

Evanoff, James

3

for the Eastman Kodak Company and travelled for it for two years in the Northeastern states. He was the representative for the Dry Plate Division. The duty of a "representative" was to advise photographers on their problems and to urge them to use the right plates--Eastman plates. While Mr. Evanoff was working as a representative he was called to Rochester to become Superintendent of the Testing Department at Kodak Park.

When Cardinal Mercier visited Rochester in October, 1919, Mr. Evanoff took his photograph at Kodak Park. The Cardinal later wrote to Mr. Eastman from Rome that he was more pleased with the photograph, made by Evanoff, than by those made of him in Rome. Mr. Eastman passed this compliment along to Mr. Evanoff.

During the time of the World War, Mr. Evanoff developed a color process which required certain dyes from Europe, which supply source was then cut off. However, Mr. Eastman obtained them in a "round-about way" for him. Reproduction of photographs taken by this process was accurate and uniform, unlike reproduction of "transparencies." (Mr. Evanoff showed the interviewer a beautiful 8 x 10 photograph of George Eastman taken about 1920, made by this process.)

Mr. Evanoff made an enlargement, about the year 1923, of a photograph of Mr. Eastman's mother sitting in the back of her victoria and it showed Billy Carter, the coachman, holding the reins. Mr. Eastman wrote Mr. Evanoff a letter of thanks commending his good workmanship on the enlargement. The last photographs which Mr. Evanoff finished for Mr. Eastman were those made by Mr. Eastman with his own Kodak on his last drive about Kodak Park several days before his death.

Evanoff, James