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Interview with A. Carl Fisher,
Manager of Special Sales

Mr. Fisher first came with the company in May, 1890. He worked in the old building where the present one stands making tests on the focussing properties of the No. 1 and No. 2 Kodaks. He also served in the shipping room for a time.

The first contact made by Mr. Fisher with Mr. Eastman was at the home of Walter Hubbell, the company's chief attorney. He was a member of Mr. Hubbell's Sunday School class and on several occasions Mr. Hubbell would have the boys up to the house and Mr. Eastman would be there, so in this way he got acquainted.

After Mr. Fisher had been here a short time he took a course in the Rochester Business University (now the Rochester Business Institute) and he recalls that the salary he was receiving was hardly adequate. So he got up his courage and asked Mr. Eastman for a raise. Mr. Eastman barked "What do you want a raise for?" He told him he had to pay his own expenses and that he was going to school evenings. Then Mr. Eastman said in a kindly tone "Carl, you're a good boy and a good worker and I like you but if I give you another dollar I'll have to give Charlie Johnson a dollar too and I can't afford it now." (Mr. Johnson was with Mr. Fisher in the Shipping Department and he was made Traffic Manager). This statement, like others of Mr. Eastman, was made in a brisk, decisive but not unkindly way.

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Mr. Eastman's mother often used to come into the shipping room and when Mr. Eastman became affluent and didn't completely wear out his clothes she would come in with a package of his old clothes to send them to Miss Emily Cape, c/o T.K. Cape of Mt. Upton, New York. Mrs. Eastman was a stately woman of wonderful disposition. She would not chatter indefinitely but she would be gracious while she was there and would not just rush in and rush out again. She talked on general subjects and not much on business. She seemed to be a friendlier type of person than her son.

Mr. Fisher recalls seeing Mr. Eastman, about 1892 or 1893, on his first low bicycle after he had stopped using his high one which was discarded before Mr. Fisher came. He believes that he has a picture of Mr. Eastman on a bicycle among his numerous mementos, clippings, etc. Mr. Eastman apparently rode the 'cycle only to and from work and not for pleasure or exercise.

A little later, about 1894 or 1895, when Mr. Eastman had more money and wanted to give his mother greater advantages he bought horses and carriage, and obtained a driver. His name was Carter and his son worked with Eastman Kodak Company until his death several years ago.

Mr. Freidell, the first shipping clerk, got interested in horses and negotiated for a span of them for Mr. Eastman. One of the horses was particularly spirited. Mr. Freidell took Mr. Eastman for his first buggy ride and they started out for Charlotte. After a few minutes the horses "took the bit" and ran away. Mr. Eastman was not ^{feared} phased by the experience, according to Mr. Freidell, but he did ask that a more dependable pair be obtained. There were several changes of horses afterward and successive coaches became better.

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Mr. Eastman had to listen to a lot of "grief" from customers in the early days and as an example of his patience and his diplomacy, too, Mr. Freidell remembers an incident from the years when the lasting qualities of emulsion were not always dependable. One man, whose name is forgotten, had purchased a Kodak containing film for 100 exposures and then had gone on a long and interesting trip through Europe, kodaking as he went. After the film had been returned, as the custom was then, to the factory and developed the pictures turned out spotty and spoiled as a result of deterioration in the film's emulsion.

The man came to Rochester to kick and went to Mr. Eastman direct. Mr. Eastman took him out to lunch and Mr. Freidell met them coming down State Street together and heard the man cursing Mr. Eastman for all he was worth. Mr. Eastman was listening patiently. It was all part of the business--and of business relations.

One time a man by the name of Burroughs in the Shipping Department had attempted to throw blame upon Mr. Fisher for a minor error and Mr. Eastman came in to straighten out the matter. After hearing both sides Mr. Eastman said to Mr. Fisher "Carl, are you lying to me?" Perhaps his manner was short and Mr. Fisher resented the question to the extent that he resigned to go with the Ray Camera Company. He came back seven years later and was treated well. Mr. Eastman held no grudge although Mr. Fisher had taken quick offense and had expressed his feelings in a tangible and very emphatic way.

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When Mr. Fisher first came with the company Mr. Eastman wore whiskers. Mr. Eastman had occasion to go to Europe to make contacts in connection with obtaining a better plate emulsion formula and Mr. Fisher believes that whiskers were grown to conceal his very youthful appearance and to give him greater impressiveness by an appearance of maturity. Mr. Eastman took these whiskers off on his return from Europe. So far as he recalls, he did not wear a mustache at any time afterwards.

Mr. Eastman's humor was usually of the very quiet sort, although he apparently enjoyed an amusing situation. Perhaps he relished making persons a little uncomfortable sometimes, particularly if they needed to be "taken down" a little. Mr. Fisher recalls the instance of Mr. McIntyre, a correspondent and office manager. His characteristics were a domineering nature and an impediment in speech. Naturally the boys wanted to get something on him. He came out into the shipping department one day and panned them out for having caused a delay in some matter and just as he was about to go after Charlie Johnson Mr. Eastman came out, a bunch of papers in hand. "Mr. McIntyre, do you know anything about this?" he snapped, holding one out. Mr. McIntyre answered indistinctly. "What?" barked Mr. Eastman. This dammed up Mr. McIntyre's intelligible speech entirely and Mr. Eastman turned away with a barely discernible smile while the rest of the bunch vented their gladness of McIntyre's discomfiture more audibly.

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