My contacts with George Eastman covered a period of fifteen years, beginning in 1917.

I was at the time acting as a member of the Army Draft Board and engaged in examining men at Convention Hall. I was called to the telephone. “This is George Eastman” said a voice at the other end. “I would like to know whether you would consent to be a trustee of the Bureau of Municipal Research.”

I promptly consented. And as I left the telephone I could not help thinking how simple and direct and informal Mr. Eastman was. Here was a very rich man, an important magnate in the business world, a man accustomed to adulation and adoration, who nevertheless was sufficiently modest and zealous in a project of civic betterment to warrant his taking up his valuable time to call in person, and not through a secretary or by dictated letter, to almost unknown member of the Community to enlist his aid in a movement in which Mr. Eastman was obviously deeply interested. The simplicity, directness and informality which I found so striking at this first contact became more and more impressive as the years went by.

I served with him as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Bureau from 1917 to 1927, when I resigned by reason of my election to the Common Council. The two offices seemed inconsistent, as the Bureau was designed, in part at least, to observe and criticize when necessary the acts of City officials. During these ten years, at Board meetings, committee
meetings and dinner and social occasions at his home and now and then at mine, I had considerable opportunity to observe the workings of his mind. What impressed me particularly was his great care in investigation, his unwillingness to jump at conclusions, his habit of weighing evidence carefully, his firmness when once his mind was made up, his careful, deliberate effective manner of putting things through, and his complete resignation and readiness to withdraw when he either saw his purposes accomplished or recognized the futility of further effort.

Perhaps an example which came particularly within my observation will illustrate this clearly. The idea of a City Manager for Rochester first occurred to Mr. Eastman about 1917 or 1918. As he stated to a Times-Union reporter in 1928:

"With my experience in industrial management and the opportunity I have had to compare its results with the management of city business under the present system, of course I am for it. I do not see how I could be otherwise. I have been watching the development of the city manager plan for the last seven or eight years. I was attracted to it from the first because the system employed is the one almost universally used in the management of business.

"For some years I watched it thinking that some hidden defect might develop, when the plan was applied to city government. No such defect has manifested itself and in time it has spread from a few, all small
cities, to several hundred, some much larger than Rochester. I feel that the time has come when the most conservative persons can approve it with safety.

"I do not think anyone should look on the plan as a panacea, but as a plan, that undoubtedly can be used as an instrument to obtain better results than are possible to obtain under the old plan.

"I am satisfied it will enable the city to get better service in every direction."

Once convinced that he was right, he set about deliberately to accomplish the change. He talked it over with George W. Aldridge, the political boss of that day, and got some encouragement. When a committee of citizens had been organized to study the plan, he loaned to it the services of the Bureau of Municipal Research. When as he thought a sufficient time had elapsed for the committee to make its report, he asked me as its Chairman what was causing the delay. I explained to him that we were waiting for the report of the Bureau, and that the Bureau was planning to visit a number of cities to see how
the plan was practically working out. He suggested that the
Bureau should immediately get busy and make its report, with
the result that within a very short time thereafter the report
was published. This report wholly favored the adoption of the
plan.

Thereupon Mr. Eastman financed a campaign for the
adoption of the Charter. Miss Emily Meubuhl was brought
to Rochester from Cincinnati, and retained here for a considerable
time at Mr. Eastman's expense, to educate and organize the
citizens of this City. Her work proved most effective, and in
the election of 1925 the City Manager Charter was adopted. In
the preparation of the Charter under the auspices of the
Bureau, no expense was saved in procuring the best talent avail-
able, as Mr. Eastman was intent upon securing a "model Charter"
for the City. Had it not been for Mr. Eastman's financial aid
and powerful influence, the movement for a City Manager Charter
for Rochester would, in my opinion, not have succeeded.

Nor did his interest cease when the Charter was
adopted. Mr. Eastman knew as a successful business man how
much depends upon personnel, and he was therefore vitally in-
terested when it came to the selection of the first Council and
a City Manager. Through circumstances not important to relate
here, the City Manager League had become a mere shell of an
organization when the first election of Councilmen took place in
the fall of 1927, two years after the adoption of the Charter.
Mr. Eastman called together numerous conferences at his home
between representatives of the Executive Committee of the League
and of the dominant wing of the Republican party, and he, more than any other individual, was influential in bringing about the election of the first City Manager Council and of Stephen B. Story, Director of the Bureau, as the first City Manager.

When this was once accomplished, with characteristic modesty he stepped out of the picture. He winced somewhat under the wholly unwarranted charges made during the campaign that he wanted to run the City. Shortly after Mr. Story took office in 1927, Mr. Eastman left for Africa and placed himself beyond the reach of Mr. Story or any members of the administration seeking his advice. I believe the failure of the City Manager Administration to accomplish many of the things expected of it was due in no small measure to the absence of the clear judgment and driving force of Mr. Eastman. When he returned from Africa, he was greatly displeased with what he regarded as the failure of the Administration and his interest promptly subsided.

I had one more conference with him in relation to this subject. When the time came for the primary campaign of 1929, everybody connected with the movement realized that if Mr. Eastman showed no interest in or sympathy with the City Manager group, many others would desert the cause, newspaper support would be lacking and the campaign might as well be abandoned. A small committee was therefore chosen to wait upon him and endeavor to enlist his support. I was one of the two members of that committee. We found Mr. Eastman a sorely disappointed man. In spite of many accomplishments
which we urged strongly upon him, he maintained that the Story Administration was a failure. Nevertheless, he agreed to make a substantial contribution and support the cause which he had so vigorously and successfully aided, and as a result the City Manager group retained a majority of one in the Council. Of the five councilmen at large chosen in the 1926 election on a supposedly non-partisan ticket, Mr. Wilson was supported by both sides and received the largest vote, next came the two Republican organization candidates, then the sole Democrat who had been nominated and who was also supported by the City Manager group, Mr. Stanton, and finally I squeezed in by a narrow majority of 117 votes out of 70,000 ballots cast. It was an exciting election and only Mr. Eastman's support and influence enabled us to carry the day. So far as I know, Mr. Eastman's interest in the City Manager movement ended with that election.

In conducting the affairs of the Bureau as its Chairman, Mr. Eastman was always a most courteous presiding officer, a patient listener, careful not to impose his views or his wishes, and yet always by force of his calm, clear reasoning, his concise and accurate expression, and his sound judgment, by far the most influential member of an especially able group.

I remember only one occasion when his emotions were aroused and he acted with swift decision. The Bureau prided itself on its ability to cooperate with the Mayor and Council and act harmoniously with them, aiding them by its
studies rather than embarrassing them by its criticisms. Upon one occasion, however, the then Director of the Bureau, irritated by some action of the Council, referred to its members as "made of ivory from the neck up." Naturally, the phrase was resented by the City fathers. A hue and cry arose which threatened to destroy at one blow the influence the Bureau had patiently built up over many years. With the utmost promptness and decision, Mr. Eastman called together the Trustees and advised immediate action in dismissing the Director. He was promptly dismissed.

When it came to electing a successor, however, Mr. Eastman again showed caution and careful reflection. A committee of the Bureau was appointed on which I had the pleasure of serving with Mr. Eastman and others. We had several meetings, canvassed many candidates and only after careful scrutiny was Mr. Story chosen. He proved to be a very successful Director.

It was Mr. Eastman who persuaded me to become a member of the Council. After my election, however, he never attempted in any way to influence my vote as such member except once. When his close friend, Libanus Todd, went up and down East Avenue in an effort to get the property owners to oppose the erection of apartment houses on the Avenue, he enlisted the support of Mr. Eastman and I have no doubt requested Mr. Eastman to communicate with me on the subject. At all events, when the resolution to allow apartment houses to be built was before the Council, Mr. Eastman called me by telephone and stated very simply that he thought apartment houses would be a detriment to the Street and hoped I would oppose the resolution. That was
all he said, and I never heard from him again on the subject, directly or indirectly. I feel confident that he was reluctant to say even so much, and that he did it through his loyalty and desire to please a friend rather than through any interest in the subject matter or any desire to protect his property.

Twice I had the opportunity to introduce Mr. Eastman to persons of importance. On one occasion while Norman Hapgood was editor of Collier's, he came to Rochester to address the City Club. He was my guest. Mr. Eastman wanted to meet him and came to my office for that purpose. I was struck at the time by his simplicity and modesty.

The second occasion was when Meyer Jacobstein, as the Democratic candidate for Congress, was making a great stir in the City, smashing the Republican machine and reversing a majority normal Republican of 20,000 to an equal majority in his favor. Again I had the unique opportunity of bringing these two exceptional men together. There was considerable bantering to and fro. Mr. Eastman accepted the jibes at his support of the organization in perfect good humor and I am sure enjoyed the encounter.

Mr. Eastman liked humor, but was inclined to be rather serious in his conversations. I recall only one striking exception. We were discussing vacations when Mr. Eastman remarked that he thought the ideal vacations were two a year, six months each.

Personally, Mr. Eastman impressed me as shy, quiet, modest, unassuming and rather lonesome. He once said he had
many acquaintances but very few friends. He lived largely within himself. During his later years, at least, everything about him was on a large scale, his home, his business, his philanthropies, his interests, his fortune, everything was huge. He had no close family ties, and I believe he lived very much alone.

At the same time, directly or indirectly, consciously or unconsciously, he profoundly influenced the lives of many people. That was true in my own case, remote as my life was from his. As I stated, at Mr. Eastman's request I became a Trustee of the Bureau of Municipal Research. I was deeply interested in the work of the Bureau, and thus became intimate with its Director, Stephen B. Story. When the Bureau was instructed with the task of preparing the City Manager Charter, Mr. Story requested my appointment as a member of the legal staff to assist in the preparation, and I was retained for that purpose. Through the publicity and the knowledge acquired in this work and as Chairman of the City Plan Committee, I was chosen as a member of the first Council and by virtue of the votes I received was elected Vice-Mayor. The death of Mr. Wilson, Mayor, in 1930, led to my acting as Mayor of the City during the following two years. All of this activity which filled so much of my life during the ten years from 1924 on, was directly traceable to the initiative of George Eastman.