

# B&C BOOKS

## GEORGE EASTMAN – B&C Member, Inventor, Industrialist, and Sportsman



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Born in upstate New York in 1854, George Eastman lost his father at an early age. Because his family was financially distressed, he had to leave school at the age of 14. He found employment

first in a real estate office and later as a bookkeeper in the Rochester Savings Bank. Becoming interested in photography, he purchased a wet plate apparatus and paid a local photographer to teach him the rudiments of the art. Thus began his career leading to the formation of the Eastman Kodak Company. Thanks to Eastman's inventive and marketing genius, the "Kodak" camera and film dominated photography throughout the world.

George Eastman's interest in the outdoors developed when he was already in his fifties and he hunted and fished

extensively in Alaska and Canada. He acquired several thousand acres of prime hunting land in North Carolina where he entertained many guests at his estate, which he named "Oak Lodge." A pictorial record of Eastman's vacation and hunting trips was compiled by one of his close friends, Dr. George H. Whipple, and published privately in an undated edition of one thousand copies for distribution to friends and company employees. It is titled *George Eastman, Picture Story of an Out-of-Doors Man*.

In 1926, at the advanced age of 72, Eastman embarked on his first African hunting trip. Elaborately planned, it was to last seven months. Hunting took place in Kenya and Tanganyika. Accompanied by two friends from Rochester, his party included Martin and Osa Johnson. Carl Akeley and his wife were with them part of the time. Their guide was the famous "white hunter," Philip Percival. Much game was bagged, with some of the trophies destined for the Akeley African Hall at the American Museum of Natural History. The book, *Chronicles of an African Trip*, privately printed and consisting of a series of letters sent to his secretary in Rochester, was published in 1927 and distributed to friends and employees.

Apparently, Eastman was frustrated that he did not bag a trophy elephant on his 1926 safari. He planned another

adventure, even more elaborate, to take place in 1928. A river steamer, the "Dal," was chartered for a voyage up the Nile to the heart of central Africa, the Lado Enclave, reputed to be the last stronghold of elephants with large ivory. The area also offered the opportunity for a white rhino, which he eagerly sought. He was again accompanied by Martin and Osa Johnson and guided by Philip Percival. His quest for these trophies was successful.

George Eastman never married, but he enjoyed the company of attractive women. He was an avid gourmet cook and throughout his chronicles he wrote how much he enjoyed the time spent together with Osa Johnson preparing various dishes! Apparently he helped subsidize the Johnsons during their years spent at Lake Paradise.

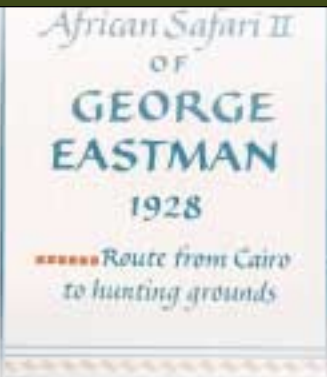
Eastman did not publish material from his second African trip during his lifetime. His notes were discovered many years later and published in 1987 with the title *Chronicles of a Second African Trip*. Eastman was a major benefactor to the University of Rochester and this publication was arranged by "Friends of the University of Rochester Library."

For an unexplained reason, George Eastman took his own life in 1932. He left a simple note – "To my friends, my work is done. Why wait!" ■

### BOOKS BY GEORGE EASTMAN

*Chronicles of an African Trip* (1927)

*Chronicles of a Second African Trip* (1987)



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT: Osa and the Akeley's; This, Eastman believed, would be the last of its kind to be shot (legally) in Africa; En route Mombasa to Nairobi; Almost as tall as the man who took it, the tusk weighed sixty-four pounds.

