GEORGE EASTMAN

b. July 12, 1854

d. March 14, 1932

ENTREPRENEUR

"What we do during our working hours determines what we have; what we do in our leisure hours determines what we are."

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Born in Waterville, New York, Eastman moved with his family to Rochester. His father died when George was 7. Eastman dropped out of school at age 14, and took a job with an insurance company to support his mother and two sisters, one of whom was severely disabled.

Eastman began working in banking, but it was his passion for photography that made him a household name. His ingenuity and marketing savvy transformed photography from a pricey hobby to an affordable, popular pastime.
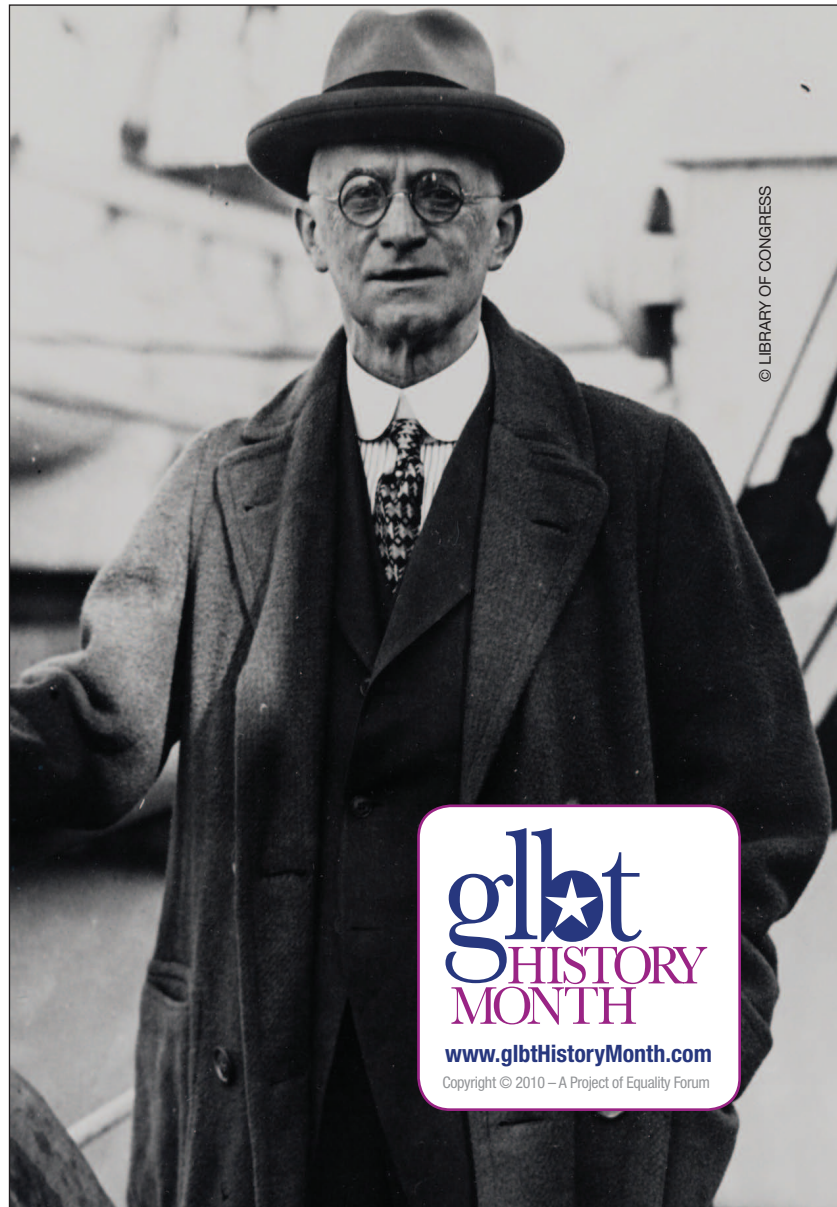
In the business world, Eastman was a leader. His company was among the first to offer its employees retirement and insurance benefits, as well as profit sharing.

Eastman is nearly as famous for his philanthropy. In addition to contributing millions to the University of Rochester, M.I.T. and the Tuskegee Institute, he established and supported the Eastman School of Music, one of the nation's preeminent music institutions.

Despite his achievements in the world of photography, few pictures of Eastman exist. He was a shy, unassuming man who steered clear of publicity.

In 1946, Eastman's home became the George Eastman International Museum, housing the world's leading collections of photography and film.

In the final years of his life, Eastman suffered from severe pain caused by a degenerative disorder of the spine. At age 77, depressed over his inability to lead an active life, Eastman killed himself with a gunshot to the heart. His suicide note read, "To my friends. My work is done, why wait?"

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