

63. ED EISENMAN (1924-1987)

In the process of canvassing for investors in our second partnership, the *Calloway Land & Cattle Co.* (CL&CC – Chapter 57), Bob Tointon (Chapter 23, 38) suggested I should contact Ed Eisenman, a Greeley businessman, who had recently sold his chemical company.

Ed took a shine to our project and made a substantial investment. He sort of took me under his wing, and I was grateful for his savvy counsel. Ed recalled early in his career, having received encouragement and advice from an older Greeley businessman, W. D. Farr (1910-2007)¹ – I like to think Ed was ‘paying it forward.’

One of the stories Ed had heard from Mr. Farr had to do with an attempt by some Greeley businessmen to corner the pinto bean market in the depths of the Great Depression. If Ed told me, I don’t remember the names of the players in this scheme, but the gist was that they gathered up all the cash² they could lay their hands on and stashed it in an armored railway car. They parked the armored car on an old trestle over the South Platte River outside of Greeley and posted armed guards at both bridge abutments. In the end, the effort to buy up most of the pinto beans in North America was unsuccessful, but not for lack of western color and flair.

Despite his success, Ed lived a modest suburban life, drove an older car and was more interested in talking about others than himself, so I learned much of the following later:

Ed grew up on the Yankton Sioux Reservation in South Dakota, where his uncle, Father Sylvester Eisenman, was the, “...founder and builder of Marty Mission. He brought to his office the organizational ability of a corporate manager, along with missionary zeal...”³ Ed’s family had moved from Loogootee, Indiana in 1929 to join the mission effort, where his father, Leonard, became something of Father Sylvester’s right hand.

Ed graduated from the Mission high school, where he was an all-state basketball player and, at the national tournament, received All American honorable mention. He went on to play college basketball at South Dakota State, Regis College in Denver and his senior year (1944 - 45) with the Colorado A&M *Aggies*, where he played center and forward. His final game caused a bit of a stir.⁴

At Colorado A&M (nka CSU), Ed majored in animal husbandry. After graduation, Ed, with his new bride, Margaret (née Kuntz – b. 1926)⁵, returned to South Dakota, where Ed was a dairy supervisor (I assume at the Mission). They moved to Greeley in 1948, where I remember Ed telling me he got into the dairy business in a substantial way, large enough to merit the attention and disapproval of Safeway, which proceeded to put him out of business.

Ed’s account went something like this: After the scrape with Safeway, he was left with a truck, with which he started hauling for hire, eventually specializing in oil field chemicals – drilling mud and so forth...

...Ed ended up with Eisenman Chemical Co., a substantial business with several hundred employees and extensive mining interests in Wyoming, Nevada and the Yukon. In 1978, an ICC notice in the Federal Register notes that Eisenman Chemical Co. operated thirteen warehouses in eight states west of the Missouri River. Ed sold the company in 1979.

In December 1983, the first year that I did business with Ed, I got a phone call. It was Ed wishing me and my family a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. The next time I saw him, I told him how much I appreciated his personal holiday greeting phone call.

For Ed, business was personal. Ed said he would frequently stay late after work at the filing basket taking the temperature of relations with his customers and vendors, making particular note of

any personal information as he filed the day’s documents and correspondence (not his job). When he called on a customer or vendor, he had a file full of personal information on everyone from the shipping clerk to the boss. Ed would never fail to ask after a family member or offer congratulations or sympathy for a life event.

In the 1970s Ed became one of several owners of the *Denver Nuggets* basketball team. Part of Ed’s value proposition in owning a piece of the Denver Nuggets was the opportunity to share his love of basketball with business associates (and perhaps their teenage sons) – and maybe meet Dan Issel in the locker room.

Ed was an impressive man. Unfailingly courteous and polite, but a force of nature. Ed wanted a cabin... (more later).

Thanks to Nancy Eisenman for her input on this chapter.

¹ W. D. Farr is fondly remembered in eastern Colorado as a father of the Colorado Big Thompson Project.

² This was at a time when cash money was practically nonexistent. Greeley long had a reputation as a town with deep pockets.

³ <https://www.martyindian.k12.sd.us/about>. Founded by Father Sylvester Eisenman in 1924, St. Paul’s Indian Mission School (nka Marty Indian School) is located on the Yankton Sioux Reservation in southeastern South Dakota.

⁴ “**Secret Out** – He [Ed] connected with 8 out of 13 field goals attempts for an exceptionally high 62 percent, and, for this alone Ed deserved all the credit bestowed upon him, for, now that the season is over, it can be told that he suffers from nearsightedness, so bad that, without his glasses, he can see only the white blur of the backboard. And Ed never played a game with his glasses on.” Fort Collins Coloradoan, March 11, 1945

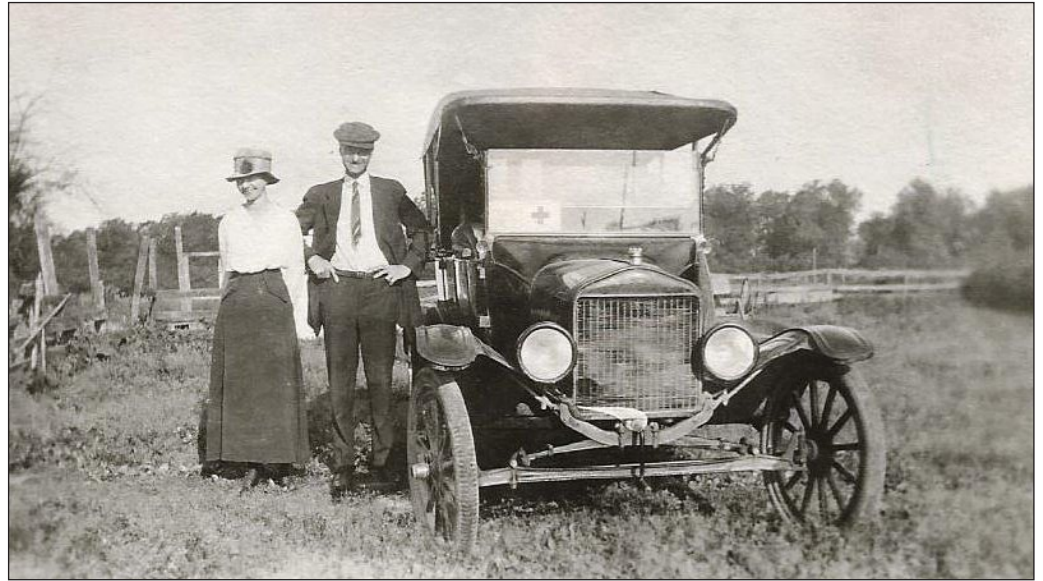
⁵ Margaret and Ed raised nine children.

⁶ Ed served on the Colorado National Bank board of directors. He earned a reputation in some circles on 17th Street in Denver as having a way of getting his way. in a nice way.

(Waiting for more pictures.)



Ed Eisenman on the Colorado A&M Aggies varsity basketball team. Fort Collins Coloradoan, January 19, 1945.



Ed's parents, Leonard and Josephine, ca. 1920. Ancestry.com



Father Sylvester Eisenman with some of his Marty Mission boarding students – South Dakota State Historical Society