The Boston Musical Instrument Manufactory/Company, 1869–1919 Part I: Company History, E-flat and B-flat Cornet Development*

Robert E. Eliason, Robb Stewart, Richard J. Martz

Introduction

The Boston Musical Instrument Manufactory was one of the great American brass instrument manufacturers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It was also an example of the changes taking place in the industry during this time. The individual skilled craftsman shops like that of Graves & Co., J. Lathrop Allen, and E. G. Wright gave way first to partnerships of these makers and then to larger manufacturing companies like those of John F. Stratton, C. G. Conn, J. W. York, and Henry Distin where supervised semi-skilled labor with powered machinery produced large quantities of instruments. The rapidly growing popularity of bands after the Civil War created a substantial demand for instruments that drove this change. The Boston Musical Instrument Manufactory moved from the partnership arrangement of E. G. Wright & Co. to the use of some semi-skilled labor and more powered machinery, but never became a large producer.

Sets of instruments for the popular post Civil War brass bands were the focus of the preceding firm, but this focus changed in the new company to designing each size of instrument specifically for the role it played in the new mixed woodwind and brass bands, dance bands and parlor music ensembles. The new solo E-flat and B-flat cornets are described here, while the development of Boston Musical Instrument Manufactory solo alto horns, ballad horns, trombones, euphoniums, and BB-flat basses, as well as orchestra trumpets and French horns continued from the Wright firm will be described in Part II, which will appear in the 2016 issue of this Journal. Company history is traced here primarily through city directories, newspapers, government records, instruments,

*Part II: "Later Company History, Mid-Range Brasses, Woodwinds and Percussion, Band Instrument Sets, Orchestra Trumpets and Horns" will appear in this Journal vol. xlii (2016).

and company catalogs referred to by date (see Appendix). The intent is to present information about this company and its products that can help to accurately identify, date, restore, and evaluate company instruments and place them in historical context.

Company Formation and Development

The Boston Musical Instrument Manufactory was a continuation of the well-known firm of E. G. Wright & Co. at the same address, 71 Sudbury St. Boston, even though Wright resigned and joined Hall & Quinby the next year.[1] Throughout its history, the company claimed as its founding date the opening of the E. G. Wright shop in 1841. The following "caution" appeared in the catalog of 1869:

> Having changed the name and style of our former firm (E. G. Wright & Co.) to that of the Boston Musical Instrument Manufactory, and knowing that others may perhaps, advertise the old name, in order to enhance the value of an inferior quality of instruments, we would state, that the business is continued without interruption, with the same manufactory, tools, patterns, workmen and all else appertaining to the manufacture of our first-class work; and that the manufacturing department is still under the personal superintendence of the former practical partners, Messrs. Henry Esbach and Louis F. Hartman, gentlemen of large experience, with extended reputation as inventors and manufacturers, who carefully examine and critically test each instrument manufactured by us, and without whose approval none are permitted to leave our establishment.[2]

Advertisements for many years included the phrase: "Formerly E. G. Wright & Co.," and the company even went to court to prevent others, specifically Hall & Quinby where Wright worked the last years of his life, from using the name.[3] Instruments remaining in stock from the preceding company were cleverly engraved over with the new name and "Late" above the old inscription. An engraved leaf cluster covers the original "Made By" above the "E. G. Wright & Co" (fig. 1).

Three men not previously prominent in the brass musical instrument industry took leadership roles in the formation of this new firm. Henry Esbach (*b* Klingenthal, Saxony 27 November 1827;[4] *d* Boston 22 May

1. Robert E. Eliason, "D. C. Hall and the Quinby Brothers . . . ." *Journal of the American Musical Instrument Society*, vol. 33 (2007): 124–131.

2. Catalog of 1869, [3].

3. Massachusetts Court Reports 109, Cases argued and determined in the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts November 1871–March 1872, 409.

4. US Department of Labor, Immigration, and Naturalization Service naturalization certificate no. 23-365; naturalization records.

FIGURE 1. Inscription on a baritone horn. Photo courtesy of Steve and Mary Gasiorowski, Grafton, NH.

1902[5]); Louis Ferdinand Hartmann (*b* Markneukirchen 14 March 1827;[6] *d* Boston [Arlington] 3 September 1903[7]), and William Goldman Reed (*b* Cambridge, Middlesex, MA 27 Feb 1846; *d* Brookline, MA 15 April 1905[8]). The two with instrument-making skills and experience, Esbach and Hartmann, had connections and possibly training in Germany.

Esbach arrived in the United States on June 14, 1847 from Bremen. His profession was listed as "Mech" [Mechanic?].[9] He was then twenty years old and evidently had some training in metal work in Germany. For the next couple of years he worked in the shop of E. G. Wright applying his metal-working skills to the making of brass instruments. Another ship arrival record three years later, September 4, 1850, listed his profession as "Instrumentmacher" and documents a return trip to Germany.[10] This trip could not have been for more than about ten months because he filed his declaration of "intent to reside in and become a citizen of the United States" in US District Court, Massachusetts on October 29, 1849.[11] He had ample time, however, to visit German brass instrument

5. "Death Notice, Henry Esbach," *Boston Evening Transcript* May 23, 1902, p6, col4.

6. Enrico Weller, *Der Blasinstrumentenbau im Vogtland von den Anfängen bis zum Beginn des 20 Jahrhunderts* (Horb am Neckar: Geiger, 2004), 198.

7. "Death Notice, HARTMAN," *Boston Evening Transcript* September 4, 1903, p6, col7.

8. "Death Notice, REED," *Boston Evening Transcript* Apr 17, 1905, p10, col7.

9. June 14, 1847 passenger list of the Barque ALFRED.

10. September 4, 1850 passenger list of the HELENA SLOMAN.

11. Esbach naturalization records.

manufacturers. City directories show that following this trip he worked in the Boston shops of E. G. Wright (1848–50, 1861, 1864–69), on his own (1851–57), and in the shop of J. Lathrop Allen Manufacturing Co. (1858–60). He became a naturalized citizen October 28, 1856.[12]

Hartmann (fig. 2) probably learned something of the brass instrument making trade, or at least gained an interest in it from his father who was a member of the Instrumentenmacher Gesellschaft in Markneukirchen.[13] He arrived in the United States with his family August 19, 1839 at age twelve.[14] Nine years later, August 27, 1848 another arrival is recorded, and his profession is given as "Instrumentmaker"[15] making it entirely possible that he returned to Germany and served an apprenticeship in brass instrument making. By 1850 at age twenty-three he was boarding and working with renowned instrument maker J. Lathrop Allen in Norwich, Connecticut and followed Allen to Boston in the early 1850s.[16] Hartmann became a naturalized citizen March 12, 1859[17] and continued working with Allen until the early 1860s. He then worked with E. G. Wright from 1864 to 1868. It is interesting to note that Hartmann's mother, Christiana Frederica (Martin), was a sister of Christian Frederick Martin who founded the C. F. Martin Guitar Company. A brother, Christian Frederick Hartmann, was a string instrument craftsman and worked with that company.[18]

William Goldman Reed (*b* Cambridge, Middlesex, MA 27 Feb 1846; *d* Brookline, MA 15 Apr 1905[19]) was the son of a Danish master mariner.[20] He had experience as a clerk 1861–63[21] and joined the new firm as bookkeeper. Although he lists his profession as musical instrument maker in the 1870 census and manufacturer of musical instruments in the 1880 census, his role in the company was probably only in account-

12. US Department of Labor, Immigration, and Naturalization Service naturalization certificate.

13. Weller, 198.

14. August 19, 1839 passenger list for the CHRISTINE LOUISE from Hamburg; *New York Spectator*, August 19, 1839.

15. August 27, 1848 passenger list for the CHARLOTTE REED.

16. 1850 Census of Norwich, CT; 1855 Massachusetts Census.

17. US Department of Labor, Immigration and Naturalization Service naturalization certificate.

18. Additional family information provided by descendant David Hartmann, Silver Spring, Maryland.

19. "Death Notice, REED," *Boston Evening Transcript* Apr 17, 1905, p10, col 7.

20. 1870 US Census.

21. Boston City Directories, 1861–1863.

FIGURE 2. Louis Ferdinand Hartmann. Photo courtesy of David Hartmann, Silver Spring, MD.

ing and management. He became treasurer in 1874[22] and president in 1904 following the deaths of Esbach and Hartman.[23] Esbach and Hartmann brought knowledge and training in the German brass instrument making industry and considerable experience with the top American brass makers to the new firm. With Reed around to keep track of finances, they made an excellent team.

22. Ibid., 1869, 1874.
23. City of Boston Archives tax records.

Among the craftsmen brought along from the firm of E. G. Wright was George. M. Graves (*b* West Fairlee, VT 4 October 1821; *d* Boston 31 October 1883), son of Samuel Graves, another highly skilled and experienced maker of brass instruments. George probably learned brass making from James Keat who came to Graves & Company, Winchester, New Hampshire, from England in 1837. George M. Graves was the principal in Graves & Co. Boston in the early 1850s when the firm introduced several models of string-operated rotary valves.[24] He continued with the Boston Musical Instrument Manufactory until 1874.

Manufacturing a variety of instruments of high quality required advanced skills in metal fabrication and finishing. These skills were available in this country at this time not only because of immigrants like Esbach and Hartmann who knew of or were trained in German instrument making shops, but because of the growth in this country of a textile industry transplanted from England.

> From the textile machine shops came the men who supplied most of the tools for the American industrial revolution. From these mills and shops sprang directly the machine tool and the locomotive industries, together with a host of less basic metal fabricating trades. The part played by the textile machinery industry in fostering American metal working skills in the early nineteenth century was a crucial one.[25]

E. G. Wright, out of whose shop the Boston Musical Instrument Manufactory was formed, grew up in Ashby, Massachusetts, very near to the mill town of Fitchburg. J. Lathrop Allen, with whom both Esbach and Hartmann worked before joining E. G. Wright, was from Sturbridge, Massachusetts, another textile mill town.

In its first year, the new firm entered a case of musical instruments in the Eleventh Exhibition of the Massachusetts Charitable Mechanic Association at Faneuil and Quincy Halls, Boston, 1869 and was awarded a silver medal.[26] Company instruments were exhibited at many mechanics exhibits around the country after 1869, winning recognition and medals for their excellence. The 1882 catalog lists the following:

24. Eliason, "D. C. Hall and the Quinby Brothers," *Journal of the American Musical Instrument Society*, vol. 33 (2007): 91–95; and "Recently Found Graves & Co. Valved Bugle," *Journal of the American Musical Instrument Society* vol. 35 (2009): 189–194.

25. George S. Gibb, *The Saco-Lowell Shops: Textile Machinery Building in New England, 1813–1949* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1950), 179.

26. *Eleventh Exhibition of the Massachusetts Charitable Mechanic Association, at Faneuil and Quincy Halls, Boston* (Boston: Wright & Potter, printers, No. 79 Milk Street), 165.

St. Louis, Mo., Mechanics Association,	1871
International Centennial Exhibition, Philadelphia	1876
Massachesetts Charitable Mechanics Association	1878
Massachesetts Charitable Mechanics Association	1881 (two medals)[27]

Until late in its history the company sold instruments strictly on a cash basis. Only in the last few years before sale to Cundy-Bettony were terms and installments offered:

> We have consistently avoided selling instruments on installments or leases. That we were able to do so is but another evidence of the quality and value of our instruments, for, surely, musicians would not come to us and pay cash, when they could go elsewhere and pay monthly sums, unless they were convinced of he unapproachable excellence of "Boston" instruments.[28]

The policy had changed by 1919 when the following was offered:

> Our Free Trial Offer
>
> Send us 25% of the price with your order. We will hold this as a deposit until the six days trial is over. If you decide to buy, this 25% becomes your first payment and nothing is due until thirty days after. Then send us the balance in six monthly payments. If, however, you decide to return the instrument after the six days trial, your money will be refunded at once, less express charges.[29]

From the beginning, the company warranted its products to be perfect in "tone, tune, and finish,"[30] and by 1887 its Three Star B-flat cornet carried the following warranty:

> First—That the Cornet is in perfect Tune.
> Second—That the quality of Tone, has never been equaled, either in rendering of "Piano" or Brilliant passages.
> Third—That the fault of so many Cornets requiring to be "favored" in producing certain notes, is entirely obviated, the Scales being well equalized, and in whatever key the Cornet is played, it is as perfect in one as another.
> Fourth—That the tendency of Cornets to split the tone, when forced in blowing them, is done away with in our Cornet, as the more solid and powerful the performer plays it, the better and more compact it holds the tone.[31]

27. Catalog of 1882, 52.
28. Catalog of 1915, 6.
29. Catalog of 1919, 6.
30. Catalog of 1869, 7; Catalog of 1874, 52.
31. Catalog of 1887, 11.

For all of their instruments they claimed:

> Accuracy of pitch in all the scales
> Purity and sweetness of tone
> Thoroughness of workmanship
> Beauty of construction and finish[32]

Most instruments offered by the company were made of brass, German silver, or silver plated brass. Beginning with the 1874 and 1882 catalogs, several more possibilities were described and priced, including copper, pure silver, pure gold, nickel, gold plated, copper with German silver trim, German silver with brass trim, and brass with German silver trim. An example of German silver with copper bell is found in the collections of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston (fig. 3). A gold plated example is a E-flat cornet in the collection of Nancy Bowser, Apopka, Florida (fig. 4).

Beginning with the 1882 catalog, buyers could order pearl finger buttons and fancy engraving on the inscription shield, on the bell, the valves and slides, or all over the instrument. Nickel plating was only offered in the 1882 catalog. Priced at only one dollar less than silver, it was likely ordered only by those who did not understand how inferior it was compared with silver and would have reflected badly on company quality. The following paragraph about the quality of silver and gold plating appeared in the 1882 catalog:

> We beg to call attention to the fact, that in all kinds of plating there is a wide difference in quality, quantity and finish, and many instruments are simply coated over lightly, in order to enhance their value, and present a better appearance; in such there is no durability, and the purchaser becomes dissatisfied on finding that the plating wears off in a very short period. In our manufactory we only do the best of plating, and we guarantee the finest quality, best finished, and most durable plate, and all thoroughly and completely first-class in every respect.[33]

H. P. Muldoon, a silver-plater, occupied space in the same Sudbury St. building and probably did the company's plating.[34] It was most likely done by electrolysis, a process available since the 1850s. In the 1915 catalog, triple silver and gold plating were offered.[35]

32. Ibid., 3.

33. Catalog of 1881, 28.

34. Documents of the City of Boston, vol. 2, document 84–1883; "City of Boston Tenth Annual Report of the Board of Fire Commissioners, for the Year Ending April 30, 1883," Appendix, "Fires and Alarms from May 1st, 1882, to April 30th, 1883," 25.

35. Catalog of 1915, 9.

FIGURE 3. Cornet in B-flat, 2012.941, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; German silver with copper bell, signed "**/Ne Plus Ultra/Made/by the/Boston/ Musical Instrument/Manufy." Photo courtesy of Robert Hazen, Bethesda, MD.

FIGURE 4. Gold plated, fully engraved E-flat cornet. Photo courtesy of Nancy Bowser, Apopka, FL.

Company Success and Demise

In 1864 the preceding firm, E. G. Wright & Co., had moved to a building at the corner of Sudbury and Hawkins streets owned by Arioch Wentworth. The Boston Musical Instrument Manufactory took over the same premises and remained there until the structure was gutted by fire July 7, 1899 (fig. 5). The building was a six-story brick structure with a frontage of about 80' on Sudbury St. numbered 67, 69, 71, and 73; and a depth of nearly 100' facing Hawkins, nos. 5, 7, and 9.[36] The musical

36. *Boston Evening Transcript*, July 6, 1899, p12 col3; *Boston Daily Globe*, July 7, 1899, p6.

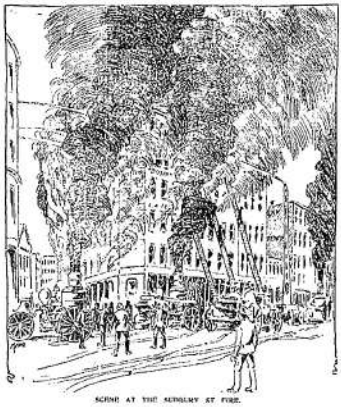


FIGURE 5. Drawing of the building at Sudbury and Hawkins during the 1899 fire. *Boston Daily Globe* July 7, 1899, p. 6. Part of the Boston Musical Instrument Manufactory sign can be seen through the smoke above their fourth floor premises.

instrument manufacturing facilities, storage and show room were at 71 Sudbury on the fourth floor.

City of Boston personal property tax valuations for company materials, equipment, and stock gradually increased from $5,000 in 1869 to $6,000 in 1870, $8,000 in 1873, $9,000 in 1874, and $10,000 in 1881, surpassing the nearest Boston competitors, Hall & Quinby (table 1). It is not known for sure, but it is very likely that steam power was available in the building at least by the 1880s. S. L. Holt & Co., machinists, were tenants by 1882, and an article about the 1899 fire described them thus:

> S. L. Holt & Co., engines and boilers, occupied the street floor and basement at 67 Sudbury street, and their loss, mainly from water, will amount to $800. The damage to the plant, however, is especially unfortunate, as it supplied the power for most of the tenants of that and other neighboring buildings. As a result of the fire, at least a dozen firms in the immediate vicinity are without power today, and will remain so until the necessary repairs are made.[37]

37. *Documents of the City of Boston*, vol. 2, Document 84 — 1883; "City of Boston Tenth Annual Report of the Board of Fire Commissioners, for the Year Ending April 30, 1883," Appendix, "Fires and Alarms from May 1st, 1882, to April 30th, 1883," 25.

TABLE 1. Serial Numbers, Production, Events, Tax Valuations

Date	Serial Nos	Production	Events	Tax Valuation
1869			(company formation)	5,000
1870–72				6,000
1873				8,000
1874–79			(C.G. Conn formed, 1875)	9,000
1880	6363			9,000
1881	6638	426		10,000
1882	7064	426	(fire July 22, 1882; $1,200 loss)	10,000
1883	7490	426		10,000
1884	7916	426	(J.W. York Co. formed)	10,000
1885	8342	426		10,000
1886	**8768* &8818***	426	(Distin Mfg Co. formed)	10,000
1887	9249	481		10,000
1888	9730	481		10,000
1889	10212	482		10,000
1890	**10693***	481		10,000
1891	11135	442		10,000
1892	11576	441		10,000
1893	12018	442	(panic of 1893–98)	12,000
1894	12460	442	(panic of 1893–98)	12,000
1895	12901	441	(panic of 1893–98)	12,000
1896	13343	442	(panic of 1893–98)	(12,000)
1897	13785	442	(panic of 1893–98)	8,400
1898	14226	441	(panic of 1893–98)	8,400
1899	**14668* &14792***	442	(fire July 6, 1899; $7,000 loss)	8,400
1900	15022	354		(missing)
1901	15367	345		(missing)
1902	15731	364	(Hartman president, Company)	8,400
1903	16085	354		8,000
1904	**16439***	354	(Geo. W. Gale pres.; Willard N. Gale, treas.)	8,000
1905	16937	498		8,000
1906	17435	498		8,000
1907	17933	498	(panic of 1907)	10,000
	18177*(Oct)			
1908	**18287* 18431***	354		6,800
1909	18595	308		6,800
1910	18903	308		8,000
1911	19211	308		5,000
1912	19519	308		5,200
1913	19840	321	(Incorporation)	1,200
1914	**20113***	273	(WW I)	1,200
1915	20470	357	(WW I)	1,100
1916	20820	350	(WW I; W. Gale Pres.; P. Dean, clk)	(missing)
1917	21170	350	(WW I)	1,100
1918	21520	350	(WW I)	1,100
1919	21870	350	(Sold to Cundy-Bettoney)	(missing)
1920	22220	350		

The loss suffered in this fire described in the newspapers revealed that the company was then at work on an instrument contract for the United States Government:

> The Boston Musical Instrument Company, on the fourth floor, was the next heaviest loser. It was at work on a large contract for the United States Government, and as all of the band instruments have to be silver plated, it naturally makes them very expensive. The loss to this company will be fully $7,000.[38]

Steam power was certainly available by that time, but electric power is also a possibility. Practical electric motors were invented in 1886 (Sprague, DC) and 1888 (Tesla, AC). Boston's first electric streetcar line, Allston to Brighton, was installed in 1888, and by 1909 electric street lighting was beginning to appear in the city. Following the 1899 fire, the company moved to a building just a couple of blocks away at 51 Chardon street owned by Arthur M. Alger and Ralph Anthony, trustees of the Bowdoin Real Estate Trust. It remained there until the sale to Cundy-Bettoney in 1919.

There were many prominent bands, orchestras, and soloists who used and endorsed Boston instruments. The 1874 and 1882 catalogs include just one page of testimonials, but all are by very well-known and prominent soloists and conductors. They include the following:

Patrick S. Gilmore (1829–1892)

> Having had many opportunities to examine and test the whole range of musical instruments manufactured by your company, and also to hear the opinions of excellent performers as to their merits, it gives me pleasure to state that where one is found who, through over-nice criticism, may detect even the shadow of a fault and whom nothing short of absolute perfection would satisfy, there are hundreds who honestly and conscientiously believe that there is no firm, either in Europe or America, whose instruments in the essential points—tune, tone and workmanship—can begin to compare with yours. Personally knowing that you have in your concern the ablest mechanics, the means, the experience, and the determination to excel, I am not surprised that the musical professors so generally unite in the above opinion of your instruments.[39]

Theodore Thomas (1835–1905)

> It gives me great satisfaction to testify concerning the supreme excellence of instruments of your manufacture. Contrary to the belief of many, that the

38. *Boston Evening Transcript*, July 6, 1899 p12, col3.
39. Catalogs of 1874, 17; 1882, 53.

> English instruments are the best, the use of yours in my orchestra satisfies me that your productions are clearly superior to any which I have ever known.
>
> Your cornets-a-piston have every requisition of perfect instruments, combining tone of noble quality with great accuracy and ease; while, unlike the English instruments, which are chiefly excellent in A, yours in B-flat are equally good, which is a very strong point of superiority over the most celebrated foreign makers.
>
> The French horns of your construction are also used in my orchestra, and experience in orchestral use of instruments by all makers of repute, justifies the certainty with which I speak in praise of yours.[40]

In the 1887 catalog, "a partial list of cities and towns that have recently been supplied with our band instruments in complete sets" includes bands in thirty-seven states, Canada, Uruguay, and Brazil.[41] Another page lists more than three hundred "celebrated artists and professional musicians to whom we unhesitatingly refer for approval of our instruments."[42] A third page of "Celebrated Organizations in which our instruments are used" mentions bands and orchestras in ten states and Canada.[43]

Remarks by the judges of the 14th (1881) Exhibition of the Massachusetts Charitable Mechanic Association included this admonition to brass instrument makers Henry Distin and the Boston Musical Instrument Manufactory:

> We avail ourselves of this opportunity, and deem it quite important, to remind our manufacturers of military band instruments, and their patrons, that a more agreeable and well-balanced combination of wood instruments with the brass is in demand at the present day, especially in European cities, to which we must still look for guidance and correct taste in these matters. In a well-appointed military band, one fourth, at least, if not a larger proportion of the number of instruments should consist of clarinets, to give richness to the ensemble.[44]

In response to these ideas, which were driving changes in the bands of the period, the 1882 catalog of the Boston Musical Instrument Manufactory included "clarionets" by Gunckel, Martin, Buffet, and unidentified American makers, with thirteen to fifteen keys, in A, B♭, C, D, or

40. Ibid.
41. Catalog of 1887, 6.
42. Ibid., 7.
43. Ibid., 8.
44. 14th Exhibition of the Massachusetts Charitable Mechanic Association. Boston, Sept.–Oct. 1881, 174–175.

E-flat.[45] The same catalog offered saxophones of the "Best French make," in B-flat soprano, E-flat alto, B-flat tenor, and E-flat baritone.[46] Clarinets and piccolos were offered again in the 1887 catalog[47] but not saxophones. No woodwinds were offered in later catalogs.

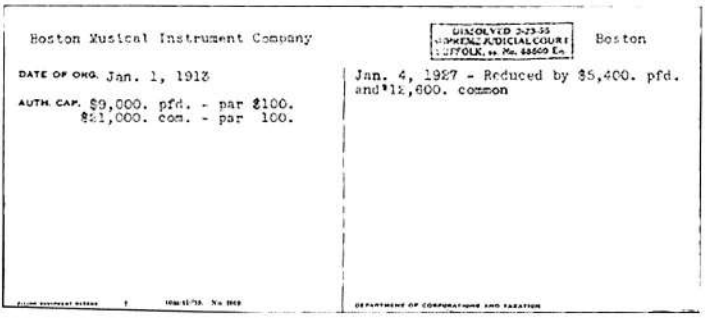
Drums were offered in both rope and rod tension models in 1882, 1887, and 1919 catalogs. They were not included in the catalogs of 1890, 1903, and 1915. The 1882 catalog notes, "Each Drum Carefully Selected," suggesting that they were made by other companies. Drum shells could be had in maple, bird's eye maple, rosewood, mahogany, brass, nickel, or nickel-plated. A corrugated metal shell snare drum called the "New Departure Drum" was introduced in the 1887 catalog but did not appear again. Cymbals were listed and illustrated only in the catalogs of 1882 and 1887. Catalog illustrations of woodwinds and percussion will appear in Part II of this article.

Henry Esbach died in 1902, and his share of the company passed to Louis F. Hartmann. Esbach left a daughter, Caroline L., but she was not involved in the business. About that time, the company name was changed from the Boston Musical Instrument Manufactory to the Boston Musical Instrument Company. The firm was not incorporated until 1913, so the reason for the change remains unclear. Louis F. Hartmann died in 1903, and although he, too, had a daughter, Fannie D. Vose, she also appears to have had no interest in the company.

Beginning in 1898 and continuing at least until 1900, William Goldman Reed spent summers with the family of George W. Gale at the exclusive Hotel Pemberton on Nantasket.[48] Gale (*b* Cambridge 4 June 1837; *d* Boston 29 July 1916) was principally engaged in the lumber business, though he was also involved in banking and insurance. In December 1898 Reed married Gale's daughter, Mary Brabrook Gale. Management of the Boston Musical Instrument Company was taken over by the Gale family in 1904. Mary's father, George W. Gale, became president, and her brother, Willard N. Gale, was named treasurer. Reed died in 1905, leaving the company fully in the hands of the Gales.

January 1, 1913 the company was incorporated, and $9,000 in preferred and $21,000 in common stock was authorized (fig. 6). January 4, 1927 the authorized preferred stock was reduced by $5,400 to $3,600

45. Catalog of 1882, 37.
46. Ibid., 36.
47. Catalog of 1887, 1.
48. *Sunday Boston Herald*, June 26, 1898, p39, col1.


Boston Musical Instrument Company

DISSOLVED 3-23-55
SUPREME JUDICIAL COURT
SUFFOLK, ss. No. 68569 Ex.

Boston

DATE OF ORG. Jan. 1, 1913

AUTH. CAP. $9,000. pfd. - par $100.
$21,000. com. - par 100.

Jan. 4, 1927 - Reduced by $5,400. pfd. and $12,600. common

DEPARTMENT OF CORPORATIONS AND TAXATION

FIGURE 6. Boston Musical Instrument Company incorporation record, Commonwealth of Massachusetts Corporations Division.

and the common stock by $12,000 to $9,000. The corporation was not dissolved until March 23, 1955.

George W. Gale could not have had significant knowledge about musical instrument making or much time to devote to the firm. After his death in 1916, his son Willard took over as president with Paul Dean, clerk. Willard was not experienced in the field, either and also had many other interests. Sometime before 1919 Charles R. Harris was engaged as manager. His background as shown in the city directories had nothing to do with musical instruments. He had worked in a restaurant and with a milling company prior to his employment with the company. The company continued to do well until the panic of 1907, then, as shown by its tax valuations, dwindled to a fraction of its former worth.

Table 1 shows the growth and decline of the company in its Boston tax valuations. Numbers attributed to years after 1914 cannot be considered reliable until more data is found. Tax valuations are from the City of Boston Archives tax records. Many rotary valve and some piston valve instruments have no serial numbers. The highest serial numbers known to the authors are 25607,[49] and 25716;[50] the lowest, 6363.

Cundy-Bettoney purchased the firm in 1919 and continued operations at the 51 Chardon address until 1922. Thereafter, it continued to sell instruments with Boston Musical Instrument Company labels and serial numbers but these later instruments were undoubtedly imports.

49. Horn sold on eBay October 2007.
50. Valve cap of horn purchased in 2013 by Richard J. Martz.

E-flat Cornet Development

Beginning shortly before this firm's predecessor, E. G. Wright, began business and continuing until late in the nineteenth century, the most popular instrumental organization in this country was the uniquely American brass band of about ten to twenty players. This type of band was different from similar bands around the world in that the solo voice was the E-flat keyed bugle or cornet, playing a fourth higher than the solo voice of British, French, German, and Italian brass bands. B-flat keyed bugles or cornets played the alto parts, and the tenor voice, which often doubled the melody or played counter melodies, was played by E-flat altos, not by B-flat tenors or baritones. There were no trombones, and the E-flat bass was the lowest member. The sound of these bands was warm and mellow with very sweet, not brassy, high tones and firm, but not penetrating, support from lower instruments. Because of these bands the E-flat cornet was a very popular instrument, increasingly favored over the old E-flat keyed bugle and used by nearly all the leading and aspiring band soloists.

As the century wore on, American bands began to change, adding the tonal variety of saxophones, other woodwind instruments, and trombones, as well as moving the solo brass down to match European bands. Thus, although E-flat cornets continued in use, their decline was matched by the rise of the B-flat cornet as the most important solo instrument. The production of the Boston Musical Instrument Manufactory kept abreast of this change, continuing to offer solo E-flat cornets while developing the famous star line of B-flat cornets.

At first, the E-flat cornet was a valved version of the old E-flat keyed bugle, conical in proportions with a widely expanding bell section (figs. 7, 8). New models, however, gradually reduced the expansion of the instrument to proportions that gave better intonation and ease of playing.

The quality of these bands ranged widely from the inspiring excellence of the Gilmore and Dodworth organizations in Boston and New York to town bands across the country of lesser means, leadership and equipment. An example of the latter is described in the following quotation:

> The Salvation Army band gave its first concert at the corner of the plaza on March 31, 1888. Spectators vented their displeasure at the quality of the music by jeering and tossing rocks.[51]

51. Nancy Hendrickson, *San Siego Then and Now* (San Diego: Thunder Bay Press, 2005), 10.

FIGURE 7. E. G. Wright E-flat keyed bugle. Photo courtesy of Robb Stewart, Arcadia, CA.

FIGURE 8. E. G. Wright E-flat valved bugle. Photo courtesy of Steve Ward, Quinton, Virginia.

A search for the original source of this information was unsuccessful but did turn up a number of contemporary complaints that the band's bass drum was scaring the horses.

The earliest known E-flat valved bugles by E. G. Wright, made in the mid-1850s, were a little smaller in tube expansion and bell size than his keyed bugles. Judging by the numbers extant, these E-flat valve bugles made during the 1850s and into the early 1860s must have been among the most popular instruments made in the United States at the time. Performers today judge them, along with those by Allen and Hall & Quinby, to be very desirable instruments to play.

In about 1864, Wright must have seen styles shifting from the mellow bugle sound to the lighter sound of the cornet and introduced a new E-flat cornet which was much smaller through the bell taper and flare and called it the "Leader's Pattern" (figs. 9, 10).

The Boston Musical Instrument Manufactory continued offering both of these designs in all the same shapes produced by Wright. They soon added another E-flat cornet that was in between these two bell sizes and called it the "Second Size." This instrument must not have been very popular, based on the very few that have survived (fig. 11).

A piston valve E-flat cornet was introduced some time after 1874, during the same period when the company was developing its new B-flat cornet designs. It used a scaled down, smaller bore version of the piston valve section that had been made for the earlier B-flat cornets. It also had a distinctive new bell design, different from those used on any of the rotary valve E-flat cornets. All of the E-flat cornets made by Wright and then Boston seem to share the same valve bore size of about .422" (fig. 12). The 1874 catalog included this announcement introducing a "Pocket" E-flat cornet (fig. 13) with either top or side action rotary valves:

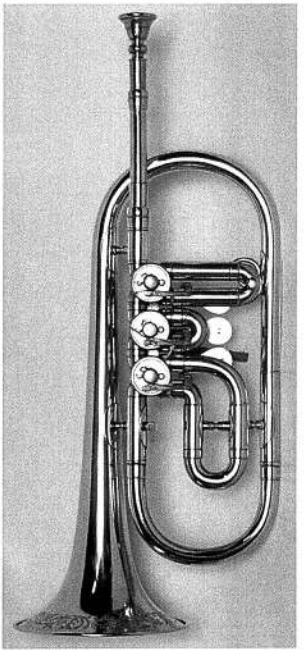
> IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT
> Leaders and Deputy Leaders.
>
> We beg to call the attention of all Leaders and Musicians, using this Instrument, to our latest and most approved model of "Pocket" E-flat Cornet, but recently manufactured and perfected. We have long endeavored to reduce the size of the E-flat cornet, from the old-fashioned model to something smaller, giving a more brilliant quality of tone; and have already, in the "Medium," "Second Size," and "Leaders" E-flat Cornets, done as much as it would seem possible to do: but it yet remains for our latest improvement, the "Pocket" E-flat Cornet, to surpass all our previous efforts.
>
> This little Cornet is 9¾ inches in length, about 4 inches in width, and can be carried neatly fitted in a case of very small proportions. Its tones are pure, of exceedingly brilliant quality, and, from the upper "C" (which can be produced with ease) to low "G," they are evenly balanced, resembling the quality of tone in a B-flat Cornet—rich, powerful, and nearer the human voice than any yet made.[52]

The 1882 catalog offered pocket model E-flat cornets with either rotary or piston valves (fig. 14) as well as piston valve pocket B-flat cornets and E-flat altos.[53]

52. Catalog of 1874, 4.
53. Catalog of 1882, 25.

(a)

(b)



(c)

FIGURE 9(a), (b), (c). Smaller "Leader's Pattern" E. G. Wright E-flat cornet presented to Henry Hanson in 1868. Photos courtesy of Robb Stewart, Arcadia, CA.

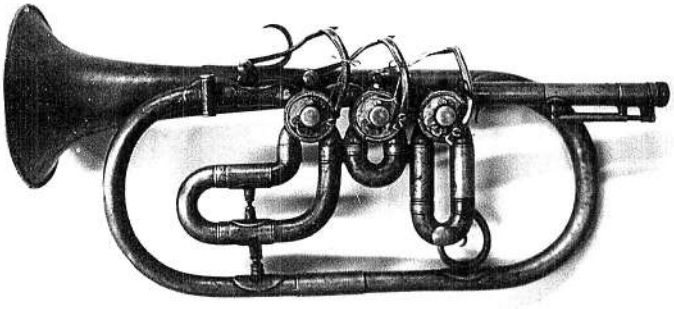


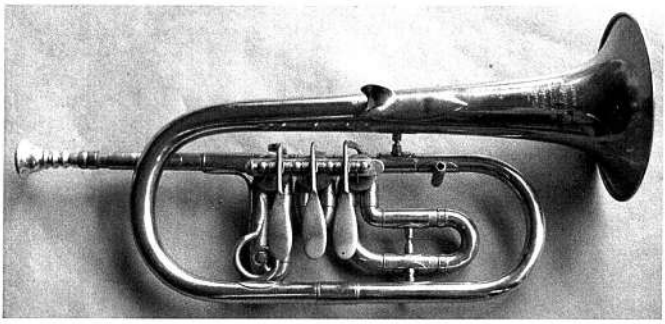
FIGURE 10. BMIM leader's model rotary valve top action E-flat cornet. Photo courtesy of Robb Stewart, Arcadia, CA.

Beginning in the 1874 catalog (p. 2), an optional fourth valve was offered at an additional price for all instruments from E-flat cornet to E-flat bass. Fourth valve uses at the time included whole tone up to F for E-flat cornets for ease of playing in the high register; half-tone down to A for B-flat cornets (fig. 15) for ease of playing in sharp keys; and on lower instruments, a fourth down, to extend their range downward and improve intonation. They were also useful for alternate fingerings, trills, or for an echo attachment. Later catalogs offered only B-flat baritones and E-flat basses with four valves. For company catalog illustrations showing all E-flat cornet models offered (table 2).

The Star Models and Other B-flat Cornets

The development of the Star model B-flat cornets began with the instruments designed by E. G. Wright & Co. in the years just preceding or during the Civil War: his already popular rotary valve B-flat cornet with side or top action (figs. 16, 17), and a new piston valve version first produced about 1866 (fig. 18). All three models had the same bore measurement, bell, and mouthpipe. Based on measurements, it appears that these were copied from the French Courtois cornets that were favored by soloists at that time. The bore diameter (the cylindrical portion) of the tubing from the end of the mouthpipe to the beginning of the bell is within .0005" of that of the Courtois Koenig's Model cornet, which was

(a)



(b)

FIGURE 11(a), (b). BMIM "second size" rotary valve side action E-flat cornet. Photos courtesy of Mike Swift, Gilford, NH.

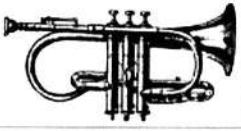
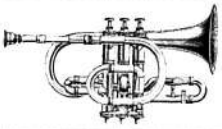
the first of the artist endorsed models introduced in the early 1850s. To compare the bell designs, measurements were made of eight corresponding diameters (outside) along the straight part of the bells from rotary valve B-flat cornets by Wright and Boston and a Courtois Koenigs' Model. These confirmed that the Wright and Boston cornets were made on the same mandrel, varying less than .001" (less than an expected variation from measuring error, variation in metal thickness, and changes caused by damage, etc.). These compared to the Courtois varied an average of .017" or 1.8%, and the largest variation was .025". Measurements were not taken of the corresponding mouthpipes, but it can be said that they have very similar rates of taper. While there is no proof in

TABLE 2. Catalog Illustrations of E-flat Cornets

Date and page of Catalog	Model Illustrations	Valves & Type	Model Name/Comments
Catalog 1869, p4		3 or 4 top or side-action string rotary	Bugle proportion {function of fourth valve}
Catalogs 1869, p5 1874, p5 1882, p7 1887, p15 1890+, p15* 1903+, p12		3 top or side-action string rotary	"Newly improved" "leader's" model "caliber quite small" "Medium" "second size"
Catalogs 1869, p11 1874, p11		3 top-action string rotary valves	over-the-shoulder
Catalogs 1869, p10 1874, p10		3 top-action string rotary valves	circular model, bell up

* The plus sign indicates that the date of this catalog is uncertain, but that it appeared either in the year stated or some year after that before the next catalog. See Appendix A.

TABLE 2 *continued*

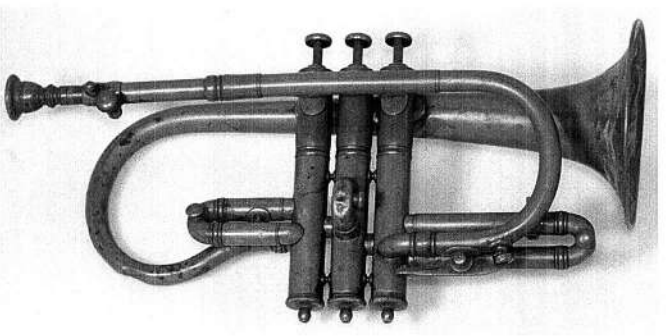
Date and page of Catalog	Model Illustrations	Valves & Type	Model Name/Comments
Catalogs 1874, p4 1882, p7 1887, p14 1890+*, p14 1903+, p11 1915, p10		3 top or side-action string rotary valves	Pocket model
Catalogs 1882, p7 1887, p17 1903+, p10 1915, p10		3 piston valves	Circular bow model
Catalogs 1882, p25 1887, p17 1903+, p10 1915, p10		3 piston valves	Pocket model

this exercise, it does demonstrate that these two designs are of the same character and were not derived from other traditions such as post horns, Saxhorns, or early English cornets.

Sometime in the mid to late 1870s, a similar but newly designed B-flat cornet was introduced and engraved with the legend "Ne Plus Ultra" (Latin for "no more beyond" or "none better") with one, two or three stars above the inscription. These instruments had a new, larger bell and a valve bore size of .487" as compared to the earlier B-flat cornets that were .463". The single known example of a One Star cornet (fig. 19) has not been closely examined for comparison. The Two and Three Star models (figs. 20, 21, and 22) were identical in design, except that the Two Star had a larger taper through the bell. Like the earlier models, these were available with both top and side action valve levers.

No evidence has been found indicating whether or not the piston valve versions of the Two Star and Three Star cornets were introduced at

(a)



(b)

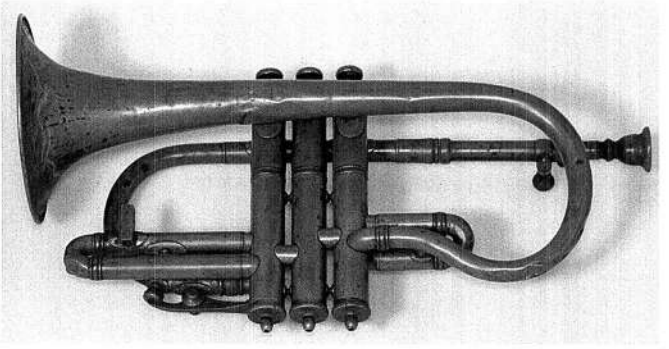
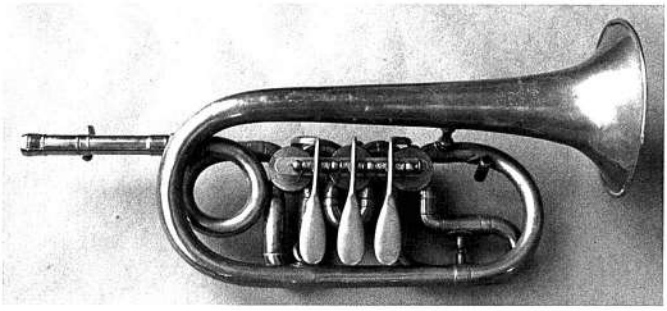


FIGURE 12(a), (b). BMIM piston valve E-flat cornet serial number 7767 (1883). Photos courtesy of Steve Ward, Quinton, VA.

the same time or slightly later, but they certainly were introduced by the early 1880s. The 1882 catalog offered B-flat cornets in three "classifications": "Plain" or "Regular One Star," "Two Stars," and a newly introduced "Three Stars" model.[54] The valve section for the new piston valve models was redesigned from the earlier piston valve cornets with wider slide crooks and, of course, the larger bore. During this time of Boston

54. Catalog of 1882, 8, 11, 12, 20, 51.

(a)



(b)

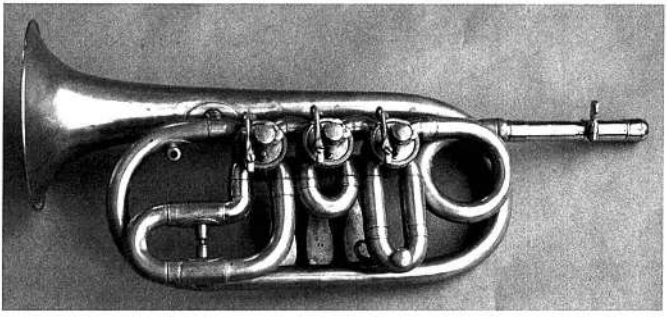
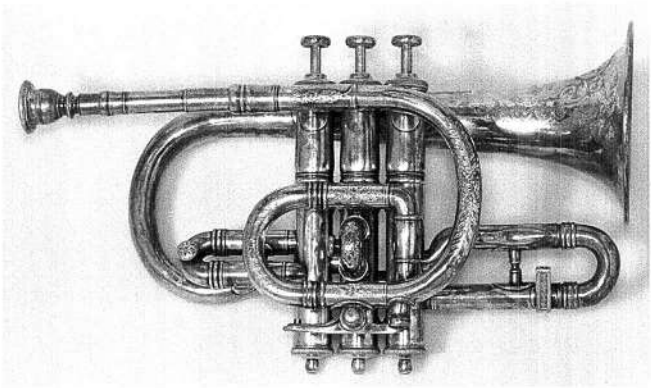


FIGURE 13(a), (b). Pocket E-flat cornet, brass with side action rotary valves. Photos courtesy of Steve and Mary Gasiorowski, Grafton, NH.

B-flat cornet evolution, the evidence shows, at first, a lack of decisiveness in naming of models. The 1882 catalog uses the earlier name "Orchestra Model" for the Two Star cornets, but later catalogs revert to using that name only for one of the smaller bore rotary valve cornets. There also exists a single example of a piston valve Three Star cornet from about this time that appears to be the same as the earlier, smaller bore cornets. At about the time of the publication of the 1882 catalog or very shortly afterwards, the "Famous Three Star Cornet" was redesigned with an intermediate valve bore (.472"), but was otherwise the same as those with the largest bore.

(a)



(b)

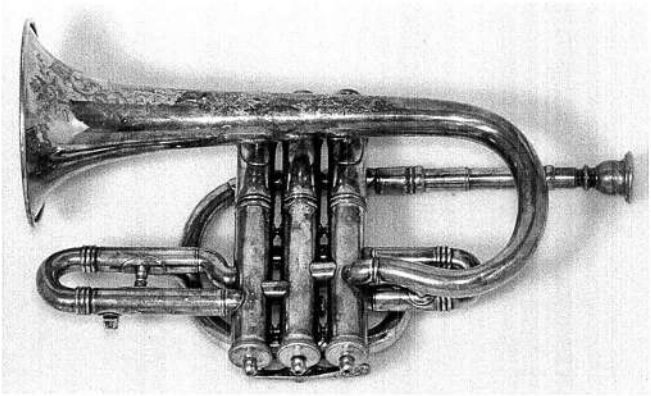


FIGURE 14(a), (b). BMIM pocket model piston valve E-flat cornet serial number 8860 (1886), elaborately engraved. Photo courtesy of Steve Ward, Quinton, VA.

Early in 1879, yet another new model was introduced incorporating Henry Esbach's patented valve mechanism (US patent 214,498, April 22, 1879) and engraved with three stars (fig. 23). In catalogs and other literature, this is referred to as "Esbach's Patent B ♭ Cornet" with no other model specification, although all eight known examples are engraved

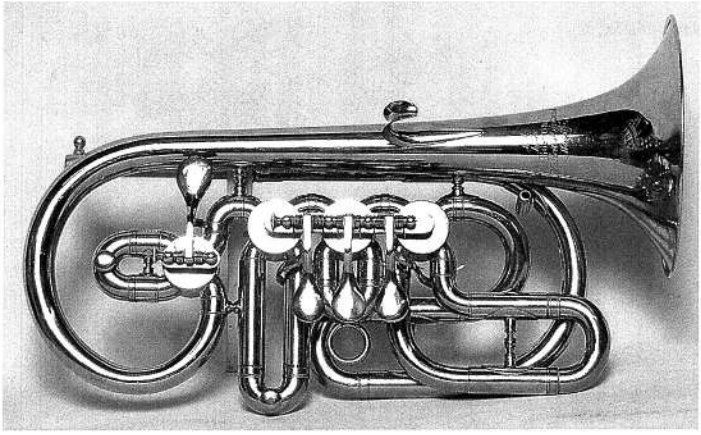


FIGURE 15. "Boston" B-flats cornet with added fourth valve to put the instrument in A. Photo courtesy of Thomas Meacham, Anchorage, Alaska.

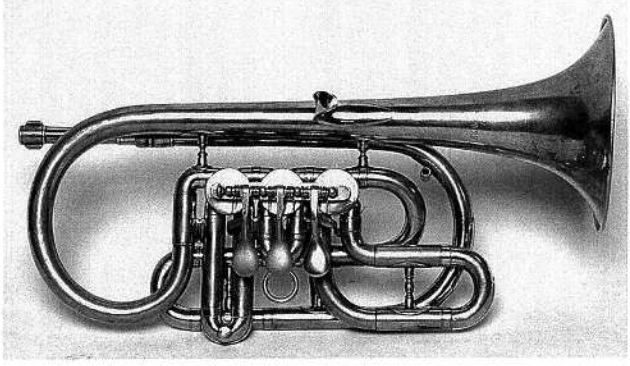


FIGURE 16. E. G. Wright & Co. B-flat side action rotary valve cornet with the same dimensions as the early Boston Musical Instrument Manufactory pre-star models. Photo courtesy of Dan Rossi, Dexter Township, MI.

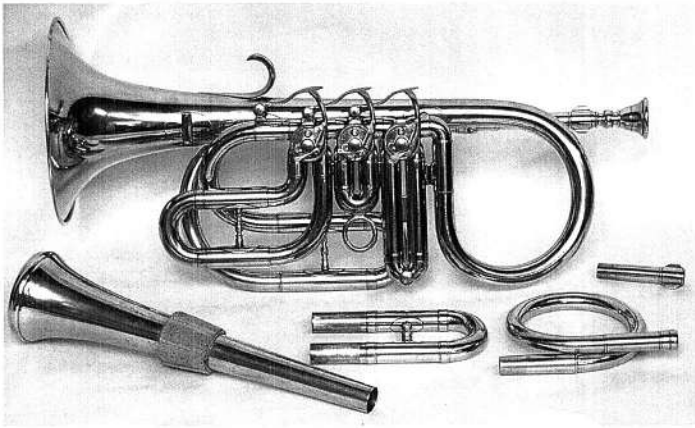


FIGURE 17. E. G. Wright & Co. top action rotary valve B-flat cornet 1865–68, nickel silver, with mute, tuning slide extension to A, a crook to G, and a tuning bit. Photo courtesy of Robb Stewart, Arcadia, CA.

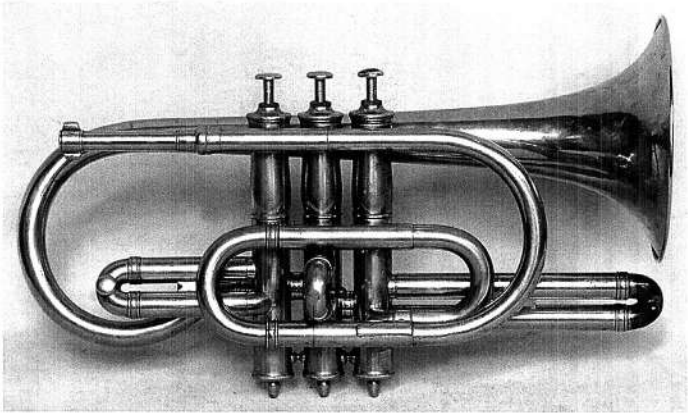


FIGURE 18. E. G. Wright & Co. piston valve cornet in B-flat, probably made 1866–1868, Périnet piston valves, nickel silver; photo courtesy of Steven Ward, Quinton, VA.

(a)

(b)

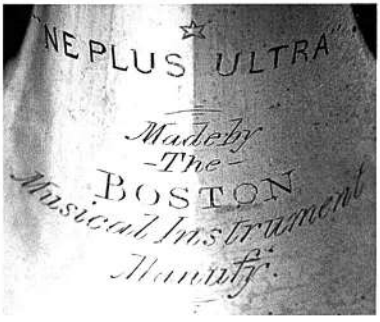
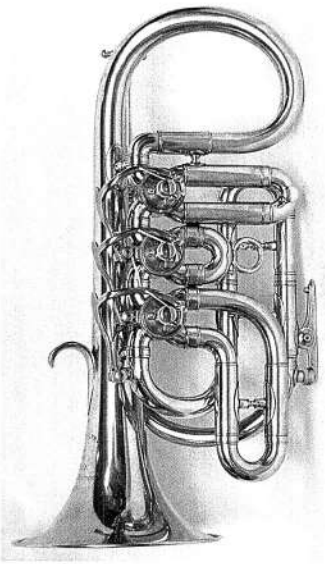


FIGURE 19(a), (b). Top action rotary valve one star cornet (02763). Photos courtesy of the National Music Museum.

(a)



(b)

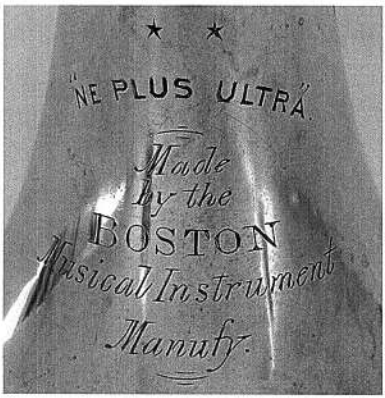
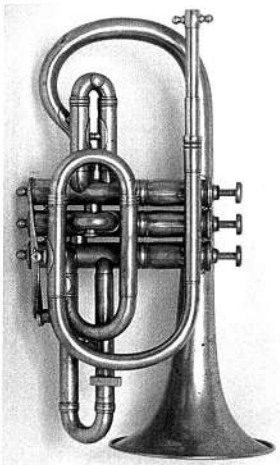


FIGURE 20(a), (b). Top action rotary valve two star cornet. Photos courtesy of Steven Ward, Quinton, VA.

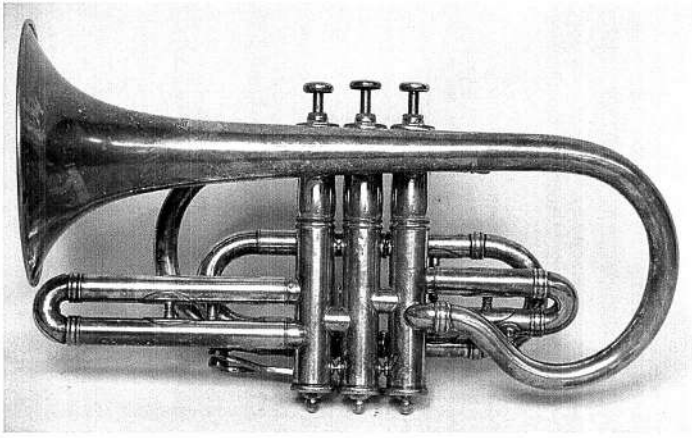
(a)



(b)

FIGURE 21(a), (b). Périnet piston valve two star cornet made of German silver, an option for all Boston instruments at the time. This one has an early serial number that would indicate that it was made in 1882 or earlier and still has the earlier fixed valve guides. Photos courtesy of Robb Stewart, Arcadia, CA. At about the same time, the design of the valve guide, previously fixed to each piston and sliding in a keyway in the casings, was changed. It was replaced by a three point guide that kept the piston in the proper position by sliding in slots along the barrel at the top of each piston and registering in shallow slots at the top of the casing. This design was copied from those in Courtois cornets.

(a)



(b)

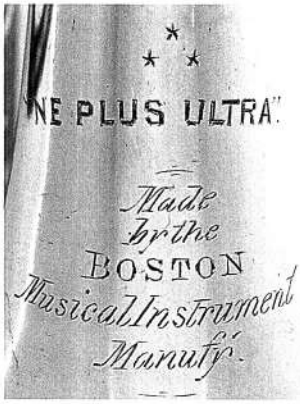


FIGURE 22(a), (b). This is the earliest Boston three-star cornet with piston valves discovered so far. It cannot be precisely dated, but was probably built in the late 1870s, possibly before the prototype three-star that features Henry Esbach's patent rotary valve mechanism. Photos courtesy of Robb Stewart, Arcadia, CA.

FIGURE 23(a), (b), (c). Esbach patent rotary valve three-star cornet. Photos courtesy of Niles Eldredge, Ridgewood, NJ.

with the Three-Star trademark. Among those are all three bore sizes: .487", .472", and .463". Those with the smallest bore size also seem to have the same bell dimensions as the Orchestra and Band Model cornets and are pitched in C with B-flat slide extensions. Those with the intermediate bore conform with the dimensions of the Three Star Cornet as it was made from the mid-1880s.

The following statement about instruments entered in the 14th Exhibition of the Boston Charitable Mechanic Association was reported in the "Remarks of the Judges" section:

> 112. Henry Esbach, Boston, Mass. Wind Instruments. After examining, with much care and precaution, the various specimens offered by the inventor, especially his patent rotary valve and other improvements in the manufacture of cornets, we credit the valve improvement as valuable and effective in facilitating the performance of rapid passages, both diatonic and chromatic; and award for the same a Silver Medal.
>
> 112. Boston Musical Instrument Manufactory, Boston, Mass. Wind Instruments. For pure quality of tone, and beauty and excellence of finish, in their band instruments, a Silver Medal.[55]

Production of the Two Star and the Esbach patent cornets was discontinued sometime before 1900; the old rotary valve cornets, however, continued in production for several years. The Three Star piston valve cornet continued in production in its original form (with the .472" bore) until about 1910 at which time it was lengthened to 13 ½" and modified with a fixed mouthpipe, single water key. An A tuning slide pull was added in 1915.

The company's cornets were played and endorsed by many of the leading solo cornet players. The 1874 and 1882 catalogs include this endorsement by renowned cornet soloist Matthew Arbuckle (1828–1883):

> I have recently tried two of your piston valve cornets, and cannot in justice to you withhold my opinion of them. I am convinced that they are as good, in all respects, as the celebrated Courtois cornets; they are very free, brilliant in tone, and have less imperfections than most cornets usually have. I recommend them with pleasure to cornet players who really want a fine instrument.[56]

Seven Three Star cornets in the Stewart shop all have the exact same bell dimensions; three Two Star cornets have the same bell profile distinct

55. *14th Exhibition of the Massachusetts Charitable Mechanic Association, at Faneuil and Quincy Halls, Boston* (Boston: Wright & Potter, printers, No. 79 Milk Street), 174, 175.

56. Catalog of 1874, 17; Catalog of 1882, 53.

from the Three Stars. As yet, a comparison of these with the One Star models has not been done.

One of the finest and most widely acclaimed cornets made in this country was the famous Boston Musical Instrument Manufactory "Three Star" "ne plus ultra" B-flat cornet (fig. 24). It continued in production for more than forty years, and according to company catalogs:

> There has never been, in the whole history of band instrument manufacture, a name or trademark that has endured so long or meant so much as the name on the famous "Three Star" Cornet. It is the most famous name and the most famous Cornet in the world today.[57]

> A Masterpiece. This, in a word, describes the famous "Three Star" B-flat Cornet. What the name Michaelangelo stands for in sculpture, what Raphael signifies to the painter; what Stradivarius means to the violinist, and what Steinway means to the pianist—that wealth of meaning the name "Three Star" conveys to the cornetist.[58]

> Owners of these instruments become endeared to them, and rarely are they offered for sale. "BOSTON" instruments are life long friends.[59]

Although this quotation and other catalog citations used in this article must be recognized as advertising and not objective reporting, they do convey a sense of the quality of these instruments as perceived by the company. Table 3 shows catalog illustrations of B-flat cornets and notes approximately when the models were introduced.

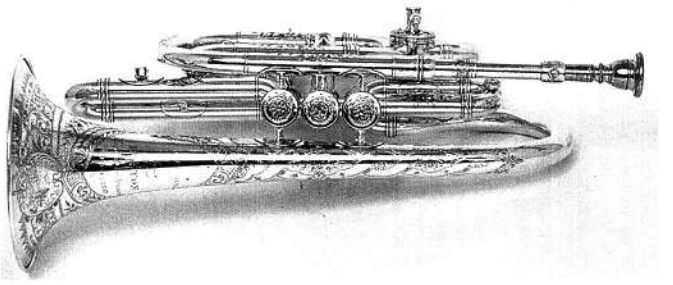
This cornet is no different from the Three Star Cornets built nearly twenty-five years earlier (except for a reduction in bore size from .485" to .472"), showing just how popular this model was. Two distinctive accessories were offered along with the B-flat cornets: a quick change B-flat to A tuning slide with a rotary valve and an alternate mouthpipe/tuning slide to put the instrument in C. Mutes were also available in the 1882–1919 catalogs (table 4).

Summary

Although not exactly a continuation of the the firm of E. G. Wright, since Wright himself left to work with Hall & Quinby the last few years of his life, the Boston Musical Instrument Manufactory was a worthy successor. Both principals, Esbach and Hartman, had worked with Wright for

57. Catalog of 1919, 9.
58. Ibid., 8.
59. Catalog of 1921, [11].

(a)



(b)

(c)

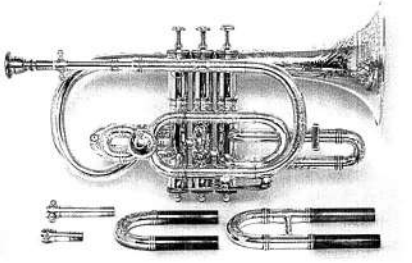


FIGURE 24(a), (b), (c). The three photos above show an elaborately engraved presentation Three Star cornet made by the company about 1900. Photos courtesy of Robb Stewart. The recipient of this cornet was Carl W. Schmidt of Alameda, California (a suburb of San Francisco), who was a high school student at the time and who went on to dental school. His father, Carl Sr., was a dentist and one could speculate that this cornet was a graduation present, although nothing more is actually known.

TABLE 3. Catalog Illustrations of B-flat Cornets. This shows approximately when various models were introduced and how long they continued to be offered.

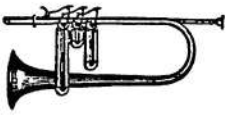
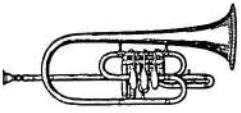
Date and page of Catalog	Model Illustrations	Valves & Type	Model Name/Comments
Catalog 1869, p6		3 top-action string rotary	Underslung Bayley model. An available older model, but not a current or popular product
Catalog 1869, p12		3 side-action string rotary	Mid-moouthpipe model. An available older model, but not a current or popular product
Catalogs 1869, p11 1874, p11		3 top-action string rotary	Bell up, back model
Catalogs 1869, p10 1874, p10		3 top-action string rotary	Bell up, forward model (circular)
Catalogs 1869, p6 1874, p6 1882, p8 1887, p18 1890+, p17 1903, p9	 	3 top or side-action string rotary	Circular bow model; "Band" or "Orchestra" models in B-flat or C, 1882.

TABLE 3 *continued*

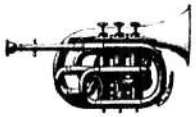
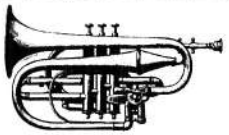
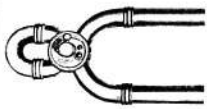
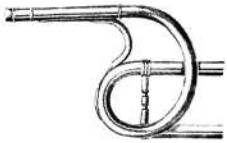
Catalogs 1882 p8, 11 1887, p21		"Patent" model rotary valves	Patent cornet in B-flat with crook to A; or in C with crooks to B-flat, A, and A-flat, 1882; in B-flat and A, or in C and B-flat, 1887.
Catalogs 1869, p6 1874 p6 1882, p8, 12, 13 1887 p12, 13, 19, 20 1890+, p5-9, 19 1903+, p6-8, 13 1915, p7-9 1915S, p2 1919, p8, 9 1921P, p10		Piston valve models	"Orchestra" model in C or B-flat, 1882; "Regular pattern, two stars," 1882-1890; Three star model, 1882-1921; "Light piston valves," 1887, 1903; "Choral cornet in C," 1887; "Patent slide," 1890; "Quick change to A," 1915-1921; "Long model," 1919-1921.
Catalogs 1882, p27 1887, p67 1890+, p60		Piston valves	Pocket or "Tourist" model
Catalogs 1874, p2 (echo attachment on price list) 1882, p10 1887, p22 1890+, p10		3 piston valves, 1 rotary valve for echo	Echo cornet

TABLE 4. Catalog Illustrations of Cornet Accessories

Catalogs 1882, p30 1887, p23 1890+, p13 1903+, p15 1915, p39		Hand turned rotary valve	B-flat to A, valved tuning slide
Catalogs 1887, p24 1890+, p12 1903+, p14 1915, p39 1919, p34			Mouthpipe shank in C for B-flat cornets
Catalogs 1882, p31 1887, p77 1903+, p41 1915, p41 1919, p36			Mute

many years, and the new firm under their direction continued to produce and improve on several of his designs, most notably his rotary and piston valve cornets. Henry Esbach and Louis Hartmann are names not widely known in the history of American brass instrument making, but they deserve to stand with the other great brass instrument makers of the century: Graves, Wright, Allen, Fiske, and Quinby.

Whether by accident or design, the firm created some very successful marketing strategies. Its one, two, and three star "ne plus ultra" models gave the instruments an artificial mark of quality and created an incentive to buy the expensive model. Giving names to certain models suggesting suitability for one's identity, use, or position (such as "Medium Size," "Second Size," "Leader's," "Tourist," "Pocket," "Solo Alto," "Band," "Orchestra," "Infantry," and "Officer's,") attracted buyers who assumed the instruments were designed specifically to be better for that particular use. From the beginning, the company produced illustrated catalogs

showing its instruments in detailed drawings and touting its quality and warranty, something Wright had never done.

The seamless transition from E. G. Wright & Co. to Boston Musical Instrument Manufactory was because it was mostly a change in name and probably only a slight shift in management. The tooling and designs were in place, and the shop was humming along. The new company, however, seemed to exhibit a youthful exuberance, evidenced by the new models introduced during the 1870s. These were built to at least as high a standard as those in the Wright shop and led to several decades of successful business operation.

By 1881 the Boston Musical Instrument Manufactory was the largest Boston maker of high-quality brass instruments, having surpassed Quinby Brothers, successors to Hall & Quinby, in city tax value. It was justly famous for its fine cornets, horns, and sets of band instruments, examples of which are today sought by collectors and players alike. Many of its instruments are still played in re-creations of bands of the nineteenth century. The company earned its reputation through careful and creative business practices but more so by producing quality products. It is apparent today that it put as much effort into the acoustic, mechanical and artistic design of the less demanded instruments as the best selling cornets. Every instrument made during the tenure of the original partners that has survived in good order has superior qualities and is a lasting testament to the skill and dedication of the partners and employees of the Boston Musical Instrument Manufactory.

In the 1900s after the big fire, Boston seems to have resumed production exactly as it had previously. It was building brass instruments the same way that it had in the 1870s. This may have been a happy situation for loyal and appreciative customers, but it was likely a missed opportunity to modernize. As it was, it continued to lose its share of the growing market for band instruments, and the production numbers and valuation for taxes were shrinking in real numbers as well. The owners of the business—Esbach, Hartmann, and Reed—seem to have been set in their ways as they aged and were content with this situation. The new owners, after the death of the partners, seem to have had even less interest in the band instrument business and allowed it to continue its slide into obscurity. The company's history mirrored the lives of its original owners: vigorous and inventive during their prime in the 1870s and 80s, slowing as they aged in the 1890s, and dwindling to insignificance after their deaths in 1902–1905.

Appendix. Company Catalog Sources

Among primary sources consulted are the following catalog materials, which are referred to throughout the article by date. Where a catalog date is uncertain, any internal evidence for the given date is cited. A "+" indicates a date of that year or later, before the next catalog. Copies of these catalogs are now available in electronic form from the authors.[60]

Illustrated Catalogue of the Boston Musical Instrument Manufactory (Boston: Hollis & Gunn, Steam Job Printer, 1869).

Catalogue of the Boston Musical Instrument Manufactory Formerly E. G. Wright & Co. No. 71 Sudbury Street, Boston, Mass. (Boston: Boston Musical Instrument Manufactory, 1874).

Catalogue of the Boston Musical Instrument Manufactory (Boston: Boston Musical Instrument Manufactory, 1882).

Catalogue of the Boston Musical Instrument Manufactory (Boston: Boston Musical Instrument Manufactory, 1887).

Price Lists [of the] Boston Musical Instrument Manufactory (Boston: Boston Musical Instrument Manufactory, 1890+).

Price Lists [of the] Boston Musical Instrument Company (Boston: Boston Musical Instrument Company, 1903+). The firm became a "Company" in 1902.

Boston Musical Instrument Company Descriptive Catalog and Price List (Boston: Boston Musical Instrument Company, 1915). "Nearly three quarters of a century of continuous manufacture" since 1841, p. 4.

Supplement To General Catalog . . ., (Boston: Boston Musical Instrument Company, 1915), referred to as catalog 1915s.

Boston Musical Instrument Company Brass Band Instruments, Catalog H (Boston: Boston Musical Instrument Company, 1919). "For seventy-eight years the leaders . . ." p. 6.

Pages 10 and 11 from a 1921 catalog found pasted into a 1919 catalog, referred to as catalog 1921p; "over a period of 80 years," p. [11].

The Boston Three Star Trumpet (Boston: The Boston Musical Instrument Co. [The Cundy-Bettoney Co., Inc.], 1922; "81 years experience," p. 4; referred to as catalog 1922b.

60. Robert E. Eliason: roberteliason@cox.net; Robb Stewart: robb@robbstewart.com; Richard J. Martz: rjmartz@att.net.