

Elden E. Benge Co.

Chicago - Burbank - LA – Anaheim - Eastlake

- 1904 Elden Eugene Benge born July 12 in Winterset, Iowa.
- 1911 Benge begins learning the cornet.
- 1920 Benge still in Winterset; no occupation (census).
- 1921 Benge moves to Glendale CA (Everything Trumpet (ET)).
- 1920s Benge playing for theater orchestra in Pasadena, CA.
- 1928 Benge starts as principle trumpet for Detroit Symphony.
- 1930 Benge is listed with parents at 807 E. Colorado, Glendale, CA; orchestra musician (census).
- 1933 Benge starts with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and twin sons Donald & Ronald are born there in November.
- 1934 Benge starts working on his copy of the F. Besson trumpet used by many of the professionals of that time (ET). It is said that a bad fire at the Besson plant caused production to stop and players were looking for an alternate. Elden bought the three best Bessons that he could find to establish his design. He filled one bell with lead and peeled it off to measure for his mandrel (Byron Autrey).
- 1936 Benge sells his first trumpet, #500, made at his home at #2634 W. Berwyn Ave, Chicago (Ron Berndt of Trumpet-History reports that Benge bought lead pipes from Besson in Paris as well as a bell mandrel on which he had Holton make the bells.) (1982 Benge history says 1st sale 1937.).
- 1937 Benge moves to #2511 N. Major Ave., Chicago.
- 1939 Benge forms the E.E. Benge Co. & starts the Resno-Tempered bell name.
- 1940 Benge home at #2511 Major Ave.; musician (census).
- 1942 Benge moves to #1945 W. Morse where most of the Chicago trumpets are made. All Chicago trumpets were either a 0.460" or 0.468" bore and were sold through fellow professional players (ET).
- 1945 Benge is first trumpet for the Chicago Symphony while overseeing production of his trumpets.
- 1953 Benge retires from playing and moves to Burbank, CA in August. Production starts in his garage at #1122 W. Burbank Blvd. and about 5/week are made (ET). Serial number is around 3350 (Joe Lill). [1982 history says 1952.]



The
Benge
TRUMPET

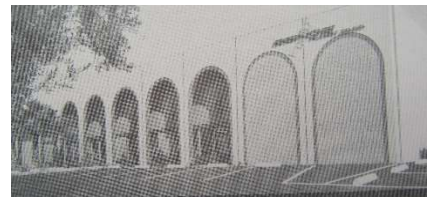
Built by Elden Benge, formerly first trumpet with the Detroit and Chicago Symphony orchestras.



- * Hand-tempered bell, an exclusive process of the Benge manufacture.
- * Vastly improved intonation—the first real improvement in 30 years.
- * Completely equalized resistance in all registers.
- * Light and precise valve action.

Write direct or see your dealer
E. E. BENGE CO.
2511 N. Major Ave., Chicago, Ill.
DEALERS!! Franchises in some territories available. Write for details.

- c1955 Benge develops the 0.464" 3X model with longer stroke pistons that eliminated the port bumps (Autrey).
- 1960 Benge dies due to a car accident and his sons take over the business.
- 1963 Donald buys out his brother Ronald. Production is up to 22/week.
- 1969 The short-lived Jubilee models are introduced but later dropped since the cheaper model could not be built to quality standards desired (D. Benge).
- 1970 Donald sells Benge to Leisure Time Industries in December and production is moved to Los Angeles to a shop above Lockie Music Exchange; #950 S. Broadway* (Lill). [A 1972 Benge letter says #1239 S. Olive St. See
- 1971 The Claude Gordon prototype, #7986, was sold to him in April.
- 1972 Benge is sold to King and moved to a new facility in Anaheim (photo 1). This increases production significantly (Lill). Zig Kanstul becomes the president.
- 1973 Benge is described as a small manufacturer located in LA and distributed by KMI (US tariff report).
- c1976 Benge produces the rare 7X model trumpet with a 0.470" bore (Lill).
- 1979 King / Benge is sold in bankruptcy to creditors.
- 1981 King moves Benge production to Eastlake (Zig Kanstul). [A KMI history of Benge says the move was announced in 1982.]
- 1983 Benge is sold to Conn and production continues at Eastlake. The Claude Gordon model ends. Trumpets in Eastlake did not use the old tooling which was sold to Kanstul; later becoming the Burbank trumpet. The serial number is up to about 44000 when they moved. After this, Benge instruments use the King sequence at around 900000 and are stamped "USA".
- 1985 Conn is merged into UMI.
- 2000 UMI is purchased by Steinway to become Conn-Selmer.
- 2005 All Benge production ends, and existing stock is sold for a few years (Lill).
- 2007 Donald Benge dies in a car accident.
- 2019 BAC Musical Instruments acquires the original Benge tooling from Kanstul (BAC).



Trumpets at right: #637 (Chicago, Robb Stewart photo), #2364, #1754, #14700 (Eastlake)(Horn-u-copia photos)

Benge factory locations:

2634 W. Berwyn Ave, Chicago: 1934-1937

This is where Benge lived when making his first trumpets (photo 1 at right).

2511 N. Major Ave, Chicago: 1937-1942

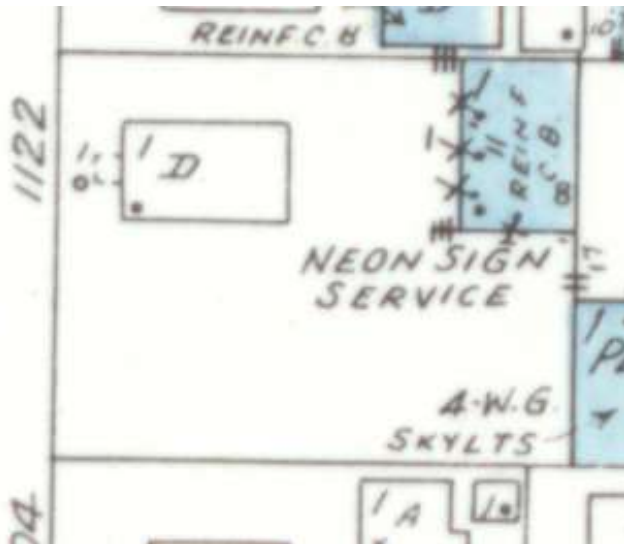
The second home where Benge was making them (photo 2).

1945 W. Morse, Chicago: 1942-1953

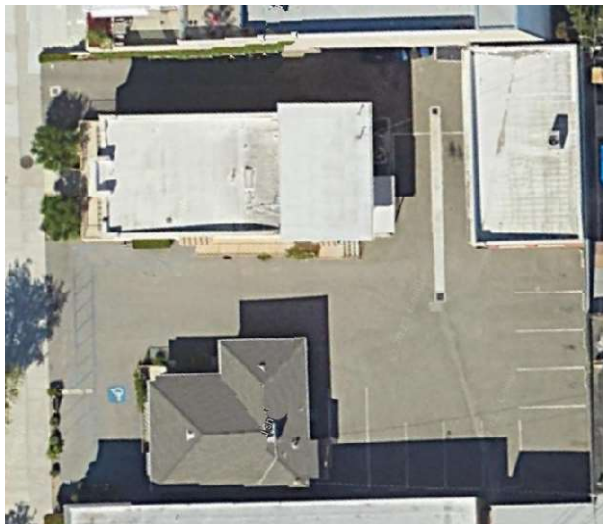
The site of most Chicago horn production (photo 3).

1122 W. Burbank Blvd, Burbank, CA: 1953-1970

The 1953 Sanborn map below shows this as a one-story home with a one-story concrete block building in the rear.



This view in 2023 (below & photo 4) shows an expansion to the back of the home and a second building added on the lot. Photo 5 is from 2011. The house was built in 1923.



950 S. Broadway, LA at Lockie Music: 1970-1972

The business was sold in 1970 to Leisure Time Industries and instruments were made above the Lockie Music store (photo 1 at right). [Perhaps not, see below.]

***1239 S. Olive St, LA:** A Benge machinery list dated 5/12/72 has an address of 1239 S. Olive St. They are using the basement and two floors above for production. Lockie Music is listed at 1237 S. Olive in 1968, so perhaps this is the correct location from 1970-1972. The list was probably generated for the sale to King (photo 2 at right from 1950 Sanborn map).

1640 S. Sinclair St, Anaheim: 1972-1981

This is part of a large industrial complex built in 1970 and probably leased to Benge. It's likely that King just didn't renew the lease in 1981 and Zig Kanstul bought all the contents.



The same site in 2023.

