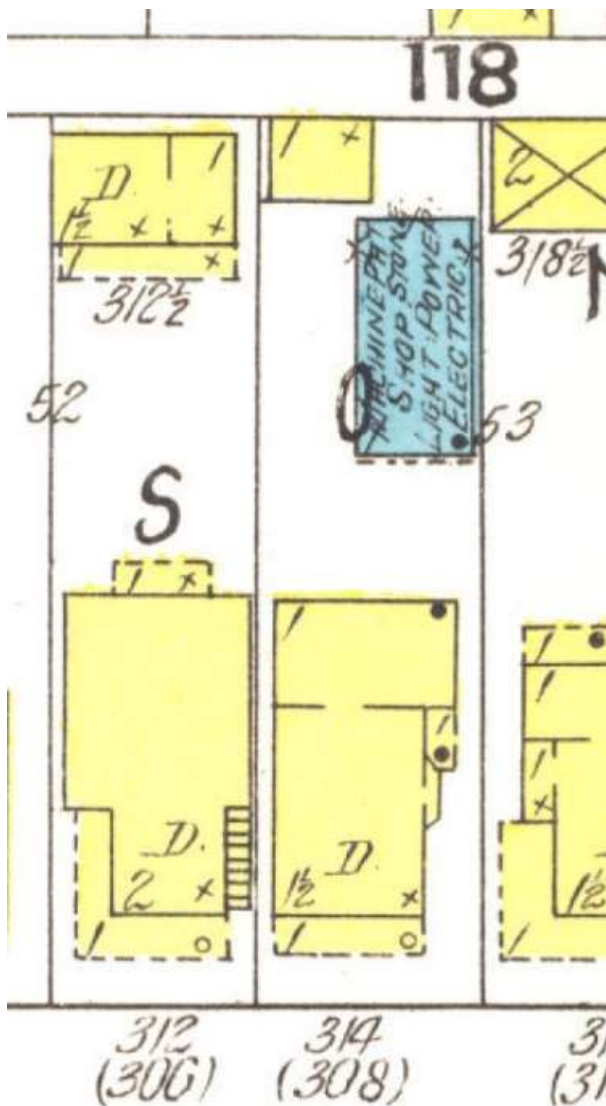


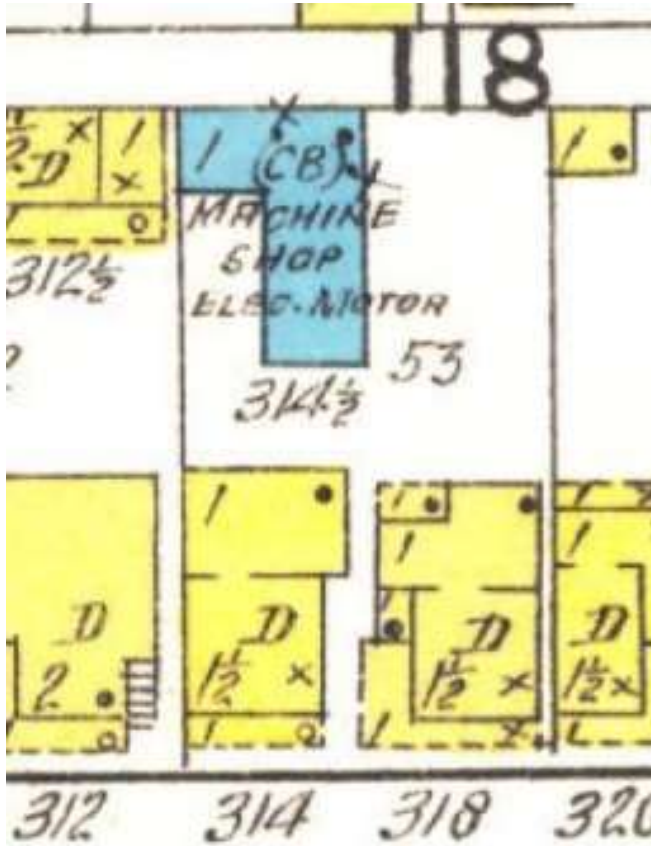
# E. K. Blessing Band Instrument Co.

## Elkhart, Indiana

- 1896 Emil Karl Blessing (1880-1954) emigrates to the US from Germany (census).
- 1900 Emil Blessing, type setter (for Mennonite Publishing house), boarder at #207 Middlebury St., Elkhart (census).
- 1903 Blessing is on payroll sheet for Holton in Chicago.
- 1906 Son Carl Albert Blessing (1906-1982) is born on December 20<sup>th</sup> in Chicago, so possibly still working for Holton.
- 1907 \*Moves back to Elkhart and starts making brass instruments in a shop behind his house (company history says 1906). Son Frederick is born in Elk. (1908-1994).
- 1910 The machine shop is located at #314-1/2 Middlebury St. behind his residence (Sanborn map below). It's a one-story block building added since the 1901 map.



- 1910 Blessing is living at #314 Middlebury St, band instrument manufacturer & owner. Brother Carl Blessing (b.1885) is living with them as apprentice machinist (census).
- 1912 Blessing joins the brass workers' union on May 18<sup>th</sup>.
- 1917 Emil, horn manufacturer, #314 Middlebury (residence & business), E.K. Blessing Co. (draft).
- 1917 The shop has been expanded since 1910 (Sanborn map).



The shop is shown in this family photo from c.1910

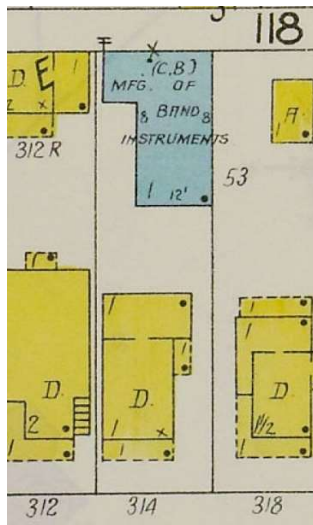


Probably Emil in the center with brother Carl to his right and wife Hilda with the two young sons.

- 1919 Last year for Blessing in the brass workers' union.

1920 Still at #314 but brother Carl is gone. Now have daughter Lillian born in 1911 (census).

1927 Sanborn map shows the same shop still used.



1930 Blessing family now at #1715 Jackson Blvd. Emil is sole factory owner & oldest son, now going by Emil Karl Jr, is a salesman. Son Frederick is a bookkeeper (census).

1936 Now named E.K. Blessing Band Instrument Co. Emil's wife Hilda dies.

1940 New factory built at #1301 W. Beardsley (photos at right). Emil Sr living with Lillian at #1715 Jackson (census).

1942 Now E.K. Blessing Inc. Emil Sr is living at #2 St. Joseph's Manor. Son Emil Jr at #1801 E. Jackson, band factory vice-president. Fred is secretary (draft & census).

1943 Emil Sr marries Edna.

1949 Merle O. Johnson (bottom photo, b.1931) starts working for Blessing.

1950 Merle Johnson, 18, band instrument laborer (census).

1953 Carl Fischer Musical Inst. Co is the sole distributor for Blessing (Reed's history of Elkhart makers).

1954 Emil Sr dies and Emil Jr now takes over.

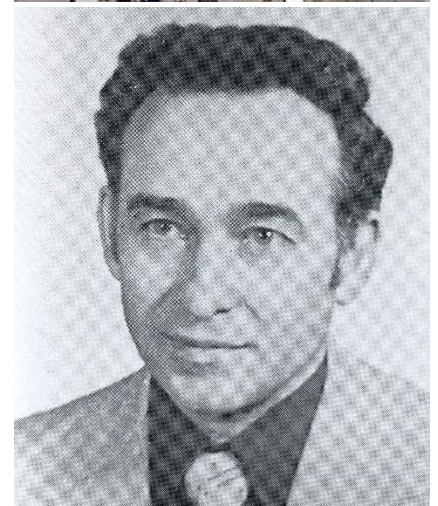
1955 Merle Johnson marries Virginia Blessing.

1961 Blessing is merged with Martin under RMC.

1964 Merle Johnson buys Blessing after RMC folds (M.J. NAMM interview in 2002).

1970 Merle's son Randy joins Blessing (MJ interview).

1986 Merle is president and son Randy is in marketing.



1996 Merle retires and the business is now run by Randy (MJ interview).

2009 Randy Johnson sells Blessing to Verne Powell Flutes.

Alexander Music Corp is incorporated on October 6 at 1301 W. Beardsley using the trade name E K Blessing. Carl F. Barnes is the agent. This is part of a merger with Vern Powell Flutes recorded on June 25, 2010 (opencorporates.com).

2010 Blessing relocates to #2995 Paul Drive in Elkhart (photo 1). Powell develops some professional-level trumpets.

2015 Powell is purchased by Buffet and Blessing is sold to St. Louis Music. [Randy Johnson says that they ruined it (Ray Noguera interview).] Elkhart production ends and Blessing becomes imported stencils.

\*In a 2002 NAMM interview with Merle Johnson, he states that Emil Blessing started his business in 1906 in Chicago and moved to Elkhart a couple of years later. The Blessing trademark registration in 1968 says its first use was January 1906.

Factory in 1950 measuring 42' x 135'.

