

Hickernell Solo Trumpet

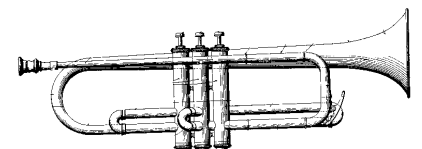
Warren, Ohio

- 1877 Gerald Roselle (Ross) Hickernell is born on October 9th in Dauphin, PA (census)
- 1900 Ross is a merchant in Middletown, PA and marries Caroline Meily. (marriage cert.)
- 1901 Daughter Georgia is born in Middletown. (birth cert.)
- 1902 Ross enters Northwestern Univ. studying music.
- 1903 Caroline dies on March 1st. (Find-a-grave)
- 1905 Ross is recruited as cornet soloist by the Innes Band.
- 1906 Ross returns to school then is hired by the Mozart Symphony Club of NYC; replacing Hoch (Univ. of Oregon)
- 1908 Ross spends two summers playing for Kryl's Band. He is said to have a five octave range (U of O)
- 1910 Ross is now in Warren, Ohio working as director of music at the Michigan Military Academy and professor of music at the Dana Musical Institute. His daughter Georgia is living with the Ohn family in Warren. (census)
- 1915 Ross went to Eugene, Oregon in August to start a band school but local politics made him leave after a week (*Ledger Lines*, 2001, p.6) (photo 1 from 1915)
- 1918 Gerald Roselle Hickernell, #221 Scott St, Warren, Ohio; director of military band at the Dana Institute of Music; wife Josephine Laughrin. (draft record)
- 1919 Ross was hired by the Univ. of Oregon to replace Mr. Perfect but only lasted there one year. (Wikipedia)
- 1920 Ross, Josephine & Georgia are living in Eugene, Oregon in January. (census)
- 1922 The *Musical Messenger* mentions the new Hickernell Solo trumpet in February, p.30.

Ross files for a patent on May 24th for his Solo trumpet design which is shaped like a trumpet but with some conical tubing. (patent drawing photo 3) In it he says, "I have conducted a large number of experiments extending over a long period of time." His lead pipe had a smaller bore at the beginning followed by an exact length of expansion to the tuning slide. The slide curve is conical as well as the bell just where it starts to turn after leaving



Ross Hickernell, F. G. M., A. C. M.
Professor of Band Instruments



the valves. The valve slides were all cylindrical.

"W. E. Thurman, director of the Shelbyville Concert Band, is exhibiting a new B flat Hickernell Solo Trumpet, which he has just purchased. It is of burnished silver, trimmed with gold and has pearl finger tips. It is a beautiful instrument and one that an accomplished musician might be expected to own." (*Shelby Herald*, June 6th)

"The feature of the [radio broadcast] will be several trumpet solos by Ross Hickernell, director of the wind instrument department and Military Band of Dana's Institute of Music in Warren, Ohio. In tonight's concert, Hickernell will play on a new "solo trumpet" perfected by himself and manufactured in this city." (*Harrisburg Evening News*, August 4th)

"The Nuss Manufacturing Company has been selected by Ross Hickernell to exclusively manufacture the new trumpet he has designed (photo 3). The local company was selected after the workmanship of numerous other concerns had been inspected. Several of the firms tried to manufacture the trumpet but were unable to produce the tones required.

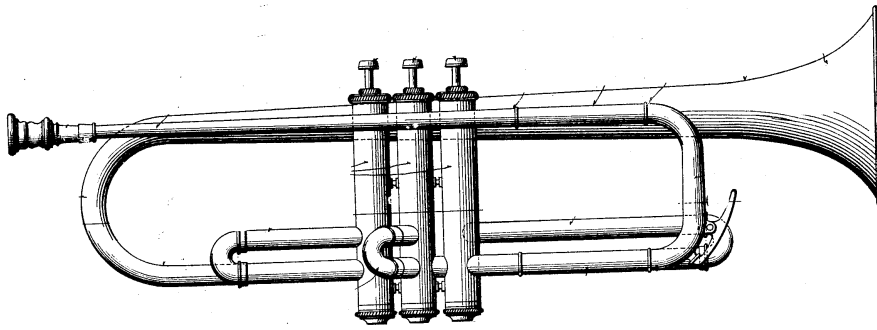
"The decision to have Nuss make the horn was made after Mr. Hickernell had listened to the beautiful tones of the local firm's Supreme trumpet (photo 1), recognized by leading musicians as the finest produced. He knew that the local company was the only concern that could embody the workmanship and tonal quality which he desired in the trumpet.

"The sale of the Hickernell Solo Trumpet has increased wonderfully. During his vacation, which he spent in this city, Mr. Hickernell demonstrated his instrument and local musicians were pleased with the beauty of the workmanship and the unusual evenness in intonation." (*The Evening News*, Harrisburg, August 19th)

"The Hickernell Solo trumpet has been developed with the fundamental idea of producing a trumpet with a quality of tone which would compare with other classic solo instruments and the human voice." (*The Musical Messenger*, Nov. 1922)

1924 Ross received patent #1,509,104 for the Solo trumpet on September 23rd. The patent drawing below has what looks like a Nuss mouthpiece.





May 1924 ad showing Hickernell trumpet for sale.



Band Instruments

Below we list a few splendid values in Band Instruments, on sale this weekend. All are in perfect condition. See them at once.

 <p> Boston Cornet \$15 Pan-American Cornet ... \$20 Covessan Cornet \$30 Nuss Cornet \$40 Holton Cornet \$40 Conn Trumpet \$40 Covessan Thombone \$25 Music Stands \$1.50 </p>	<p> Supertone Trombone \$25 King Trombone \$40 Hickernell Trumpet \$70 Saxophone, Fischer \$50 Saxophone, Elkhart ... \$69.50 Saxophone, Conn \$80 Kohler Clarinet \$25 </p>
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1930 Ross Hickernell, music studio, #152 Belvedere Ave, Warren, Ohio; Josephine is a grade school teacher. (census)

1933 Ross Hickernell, of the Dana School, is mentioned as the designer of the Solo trumpet (*The Sun*, N. Canton, Ohio)

1935 “We invite you to hear and play a new trumpet (at the Winter Music Store, Altoona, PA) designed by professor Ross Hickernell, head of the band department of the Dana Musical Institite, Warren, Ohio.” (*Altoona Tribute*, Aug. 6th)

1940 Ross Hickernell, music teacher, Warren, OH (census)

1944 Ross dies on September 28th in Warren.



Instruments found:

Trombone marked "Hickernell Solo Trombone Warren Ohio" is described at *The Trombone Forum* on the internet on May 31, 2017; 0.509" bore and 7.5" bell; it's described as having a "mellow & dark tone"

Solo Trumpet with serial #6 (Tom Meacham collection)



Solo Trumpet #24 (author's collection); these early examples were made by the Nuss Mfg Co in Harrisburg, PA and would date to 1922 or later as stated in the news articles above; they have a forward valve design following the patent drawing



Nuss Supreme #5019. This has the same patent stamp for July, 1910 (photo 4) which refers to the valve guide design by Blessing; the likely maker of the valves.



#12698 also appears to be an early example with the same patent stamp and bell engraving (below); the serial number would fit with Blessing c.1922



Below is Nuss #83647 which is described as having a conical tuning slide of 0.435" to 0.450" then 0.459" in the valves. This sounds the same as the 1922 Hickernell patent. The large jumps in serial numbers for the few Nuss examples found would imply that they bought valves from others.



Serial numbers found with probable Nuss origins are 6, 24, 5027, 12694, 12698, & 25219. If this last one also has Blessing valves then it dates to c.1932; putting the York trumpets in the mid-1930s. This would match with the 1930s references found.

York Trumpets:

The next group of Hickernell Solo trumpets found are made by York in Grand Rapids. These all have serial numbers in the 3000 range and are marked "Made by York". They do not follow the York serial number sequence so we have at least 55 made in the examples found from 3273 to 3328.

#3288 (photos 1-3 at right; this was a parts horn sold at auction)

Others found are #3273, 3299, 3301, 3310, 3317, & 3328