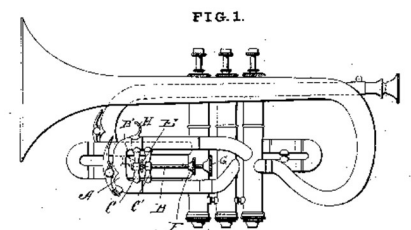


# Martin Band Instrument Company

## Elkhart, Indiana

- 1857 Johann Heinrich Martin (1835-1910, photo 2) emigrates to New York from Saxony; likely working with his brother Gottfried Martin, a musical instrument maker who had emigrated in 1850 (immigration record & city directory).
- 1862 Henry Martin, instrument maker, #45 Marion, NYC (dir).
- 1863 Henry is gone from the city directory.
- 1865 Henry moved to Chicago this year (obituary).
- 1866 No listing for Martin as instrument maker in Chicago (dir).
- 1870 Henry Martin, musical inst maker, r.120 Erie (dir). He has no business listing so may have worked for J. Bauer & Co, Lyon & Healy, or simply worked out of his home.
- 1871 No listing for Martin in Chicago, but the great fire in October is said to have destroyed his business.
- 1875 Henry Martin, inst. maker, r.340 Claybourn Ave (dir). He has no business listing in the directory.
- 1876 John Henry Martin walks from Chicago to Elkhart to become the sixth employee of Conn (family lore).
- 1880 John Martin, horn factory worker; son Charles Henry Martin (1866-1927) is working at a paper mill (census).
- 1881 Son Henry starts working for Conn (no documents).
- 1885 John joins brother Godfrey at the Michigan Musical Mfg. Co in Detroit. John returns to Elkhart in 1886 (NLI).
- 1890 John and sons Charles H. & Mortiz are working for Conn. Sons Charles E. and Fred are cigar makers (directory).
- 1902 John (photo 2) retires from Conn due to a stroke.
- 1903 C. Henry Martin (photo 4) is living in Grand Rapids, MI and receives patent #736,756 for a cornet tuning slide design (photo 3). It is said that he was working for J W York at this time.
- 1904 The J H Martin Band Instrument Co. is founded (Reed).
- 1905 After John suffers another stroke, the sons incorporate as the Martin Band Instrument Company with Charles Henry Martin and probably brothers William E. (b.1867) and Mortiz (b. 1871). They may have worked out of Henry's home at #111 Pacific (1900 census) which address is also listed for Buescher in 1895 (Sanborn map).



Brothers Robert J. and Charles E. are listed as cigar makers at this time (census).

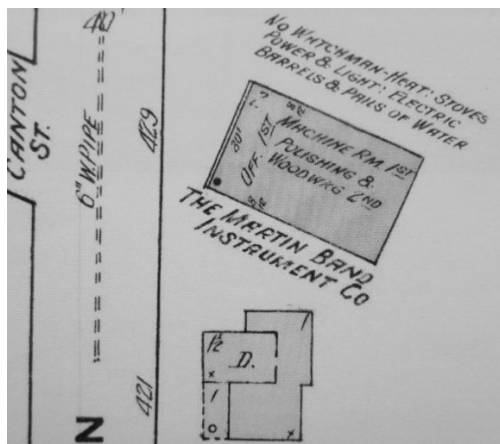
1906 From the metal workers' union representative, "Went to Elkhart, Ind., and secured an agreement with the Martin Band Instrument Co. for the use of the label." (November)

1908 Martin BIC is fast-growing and added a two-story brick building this year (metal workers' union). (photo 1)

1910 Martin is strictly union and fast growing (union report).

1910 John dies Nov 25. Henry, William & Robert are band instrument makers. Brother-in-law Oscar Myers is a case maker. Henry's sons Charles E. (b.1891) and Wright (b.1893) are workers at the factory (census).

1910 The Sanborn map below shows the factory at #429 Baldwin Ave.; a 2-story brick building measuring about 40' x 60'. The 1<sup>st</sup> floor is an office and machine room while the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor is polishing and woodworking. John, William & Robert are living at #421 Baldwin which is a residence on the same property (census).

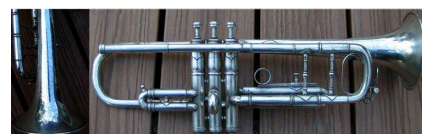
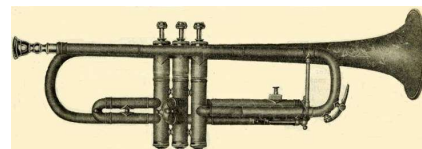


1911 Henry Martin receives patent #1,003,931 for a valve design he applied for in 1905 from Elkhart.

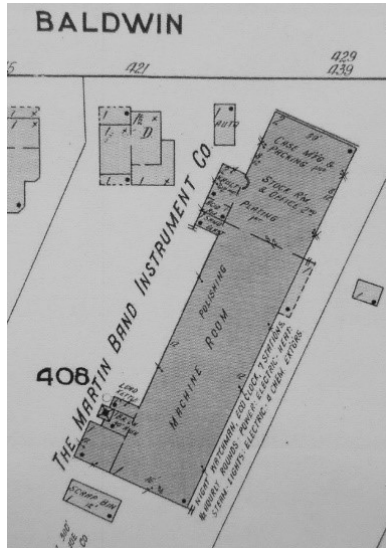
1912 William Martin (photo 6), band instrument maker (marriage doc.). Four-year employee Francis Compton (1885-1962) buys a majority of stock in Martin. He started as a bookkeeper. Martin is on the brass workers' union list.

1913 Henry Martin receives patent #1,071,526 for progressive bell thickness design [possible copy of the Buescher 1907 patent for Split-No-Tone bell].

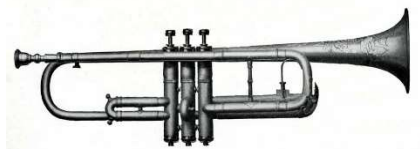
1916 Compton brings in William Gronert, founder of the Elkhart Musical Instrument Co. in 1911, to be the GM. The two companies are merged. Gronert is also involved in the American Manufacturing Co. with Harry Pedler.



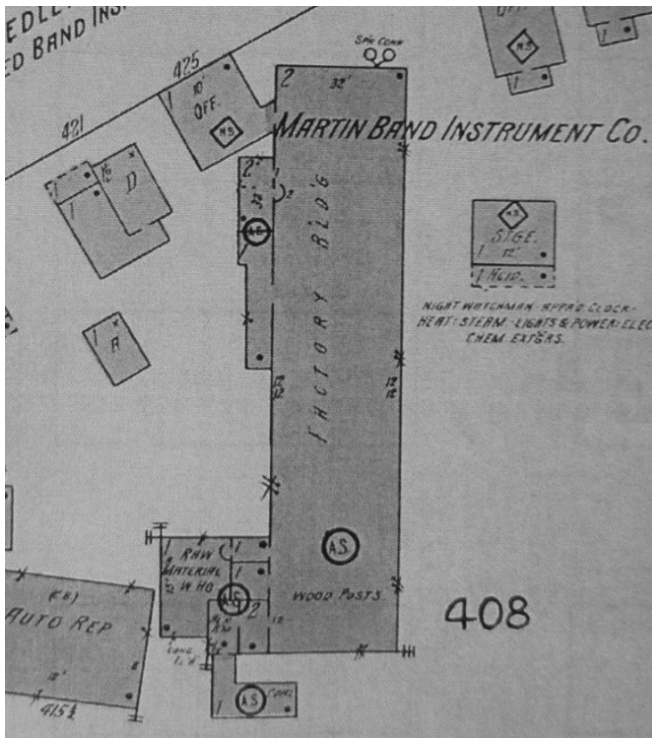
- 1916 Martin had a metal workers' strike going on, which lasted until 1918 when the union was dropped (union records).
- 1917 The factory now has a one-story brick addition to the rear of the original building that measures about 40' x 140'. This is the new machine room (Sanborn map below & photo 1 last page).



- 1918 Francis Compton is pres. of Martin Band Inst. Co. (draft). Last year on brass workers' union list (union records).
- 1919 William Gronert dies, and Martin is reorganized when the majority interest is sold to Orville P. Bassett (1870-1931).
- 1920 Orville Bassett (photo 1), band instrument manufacturer (census). William C. Reid, horn maker (census) [he was formerly with Elkhart BIC]. Henry Martin, superintendent for band instrument factory (census). Robert Martin is now in Brooklyn working for a publisher (census).
- 1920 The Superlative trumpet is a new model in January (*International Musician* ad). (photo 3) The Superlative cornet is advertised in March (*IM*).
- 1921 Fred Holtz (1885-1965, photo 2) starts as sales manager for Martin (Chris Holtz).
- 1922 Henry Martin ends presidency and starts with Buescher. Martin listed at #425-433 Baldwin with James State as president and Howard E. Wurlitzer (photo 5), of Cincinnati, as vp [Howard was president of Wurlitzer at this time, and they sold Martin instruments.].
- 1923 The Handcraft inscription is added to the bell. A new addition is nearing completion in November to double capacity & they are already planning another one (*MTR*).
- 1923 Ad for new Dansant model Superlative trumpet in June.



1927 Bassett is the manager of Martin (marriage doc.). The factory is now all 2 stories, and a new office has been added along the street (Sanborn map below).



1927 The new addition to the factory is to double production.

1928 Fred Holtz and James State incorporate the Indiana Band Instrument Co. in December to make low-priced instruments at the Martin factory (MTR). Trumpet #88913 was stolen from a store in August (MTR).



1929 Martin introduces the new Master model trumpet with nickel silver bell (MTR, May).

1930 Martin buys Harry Pedler & Co., a woodwind maker across the street at #430 Baldwin. The new Sport model trumpet and cornet are introduced in June (MTR).

1930 Martin has a deadline of August 1<sup>st</sup> for a contest to submit names for their new Sport model trumpets, trombones and cornets (MTR). [They decide on "Troubadour".]

1931 Bassett dies and Holtz becomes president & GM of Martin. Louis Armstrong buys a Martin Troubadour model trumpet (photo 4) which was new and quite popular at this time (Music Trade Review, Nov).



Chicago Musical Inst Co, 311 S. Wabash, Martin dealer.

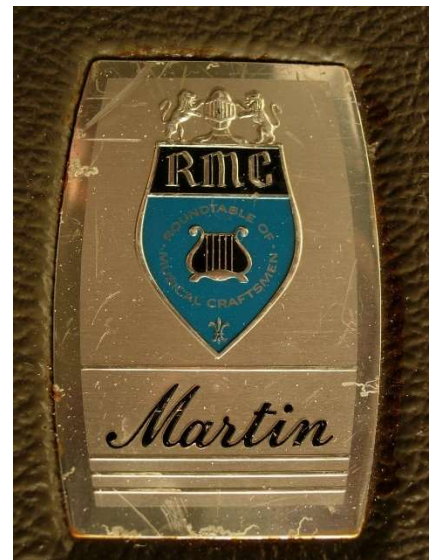
1933 The Imperial model replaces the Superlative.

1935 Fred Holtz Jr starts working at Martin (Chris Holtz).

1939 The Committee model trombone is introduced.



- 1940 Charles E. Martin (photo 3), horn maker, #1611 Main St. (census). The Committee model trumpet is introduced.
- 1942 The Indiana Band Inst. Co. merges with Martin and becomes their student model (Chris Holtz).
- 1948 Holtz retires from Martin and becomes president of the Pedler Co., a subsidiary of Martin. Robert Stahr new pres.
- 1953 Robert L. Stahr\* is president & GM of Martin. Holtz the same for Pedler. F.A. Holtz Jr. is sales manager for Martin and H. J. Martin is comptroller (Reed). Cases are made by the Pedler Co (Reed's history of Elkhart makers).
- 1958 Martin sells the Pedler Co. to Selmer.
- 1959 Committee trumpets & cornets now have Custom models.
- 1961 Martin is purchased by RMC (Roundtable of Musical Craftsmen / Richard's Music Co). (photo 1)
- 1962 Fred Holtz Jr leaves Martin (Chris Holtz).
- 1964 RMC finalizes bankruptcy on June 26th and Martin is purchased by Wurlitzer.
- 1964 The Magna model trumpet first shows up. Some sources say it came out in 1955 or 1956 but it's not in the catalog as late as 1962. The Magna model sax starts in 1959.
- 1965 Wurlitzer introduces the Martin Galaxy trumpet.
- 1969 All production at Martin ends in October as they could not compete with their antiquated factory. The machinery was sold, and the building and property given to the city (1973 US tariff report).
- 1970 Martin is sold to Leblanc (US tariff report). [Just the name?]
- 1971 Martin is sold to Leblanc and design work is done at the old Martin factory. They develop new designs for the Committee and Magna trumpets and make a limited run of about 50 Magna Mic Gillette models with a 6" bell (Ramirez NAMM interview).
- 1980s A Bach trumpet is used to design the new Holton T-series trumpets at the old Martin factory (Trumpet-History).
- 2004 Martin becomes part of Steinway Musical Prop.
- 2008 Conn-Selmer ends production of Martin instruments.
- 2021 Richard Martin, great grandson of Henry Charles Martin, has revived the Martin name and is having BAC in Kansas City build a modern Committee model trumpet.



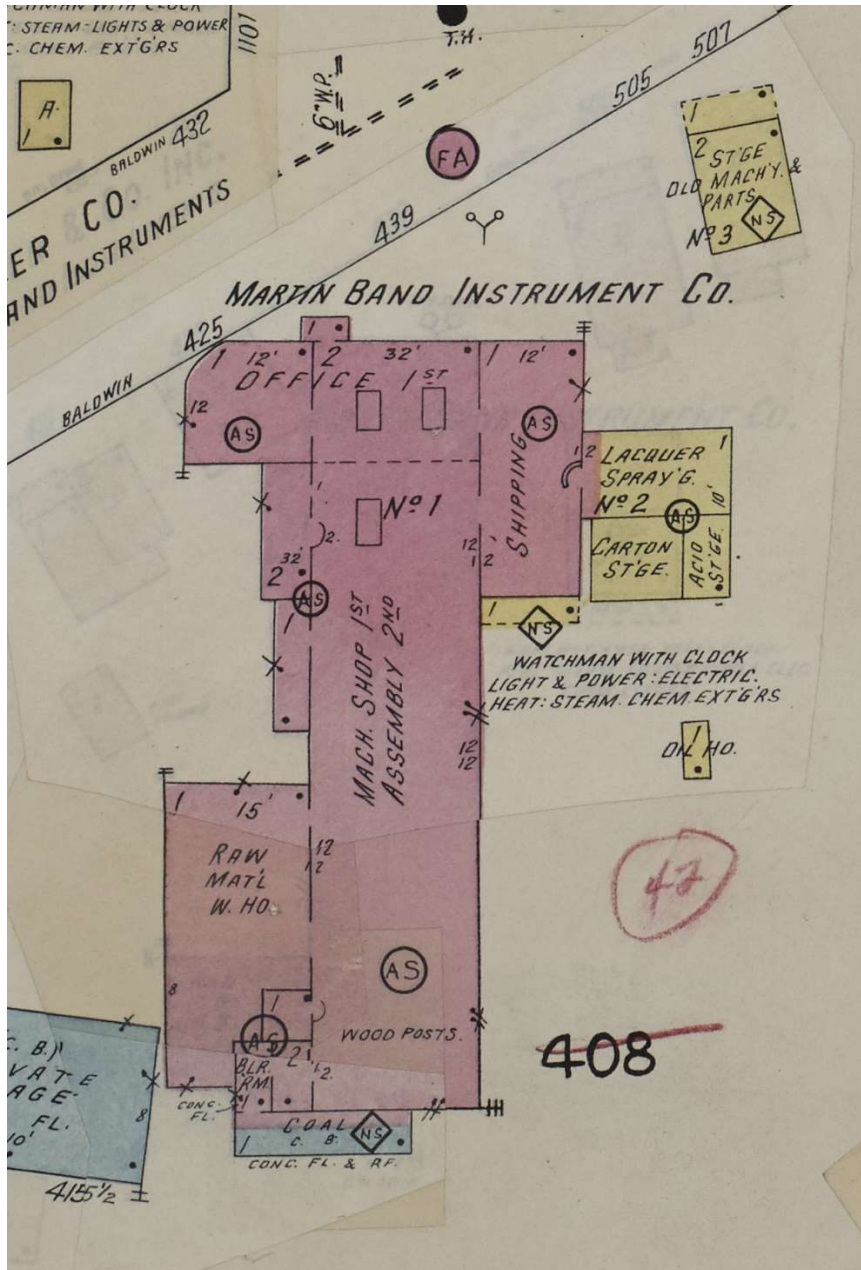
Instrument photos from  
Horn-u-copia.net &  
auctions.

My gorgeous Martin Dansant trumpet from 1930 with Special Deluxe Finish #6; originally retailing for about \$250. (photos 2 & 3)

\*Robert Lewis Stahr (1898-1980) was the assistant sales manager for Martin by 1923, sales manager by 1940, and president by 1948. He retired in 1960 (photo 1).



**Martin Factory in 1950:** This Sanborn map shows several additions since 1927. In 2023, this area had been changed to tennis courts.



A big thank you to Marcia Haut, great-granddaughter of Henry Martin, for providing all the family photos.