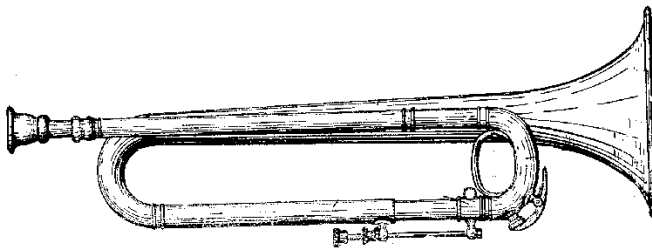


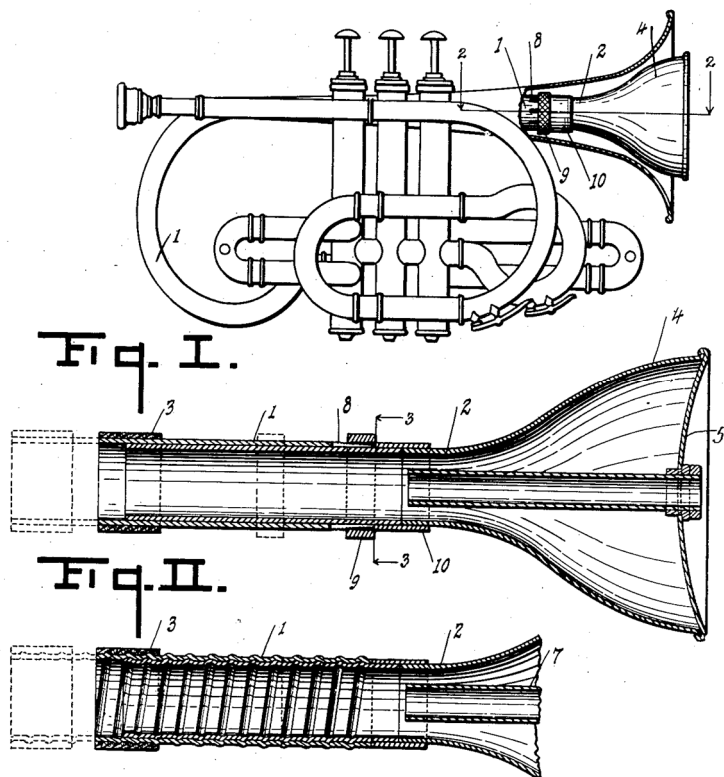
Harry B. Jay Company

Chicago

- 1860 Harry is born in January in Iowa (census)
- 1880 Harry is living in Sugar Grove, IL, musician (census)
- 1900 living in Elburn, IL, musician (census)
- 1907 granted Patent #856,642 for telescopic tuning slide, living in Kalamazoo, MI
- 1910 established the Harry B. Jay Co. in Chicago with Fred Plain as the financial backer; uses "Columbia" trade name; W.K. Morris – president; Fred Plain – sec.; located on the 6th floor at #542 W. Jackson Blvd.; home at #90 LaSalle in Aurora, Illinois, musical manufacturer (census)
- 1911 granted patent #1,003,049 for tuning slide stop rod (below); Harry gives his address as Chicago



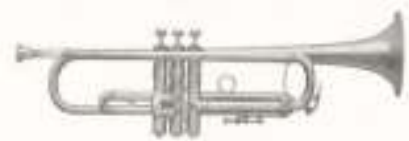
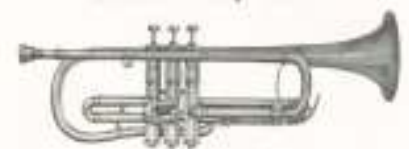
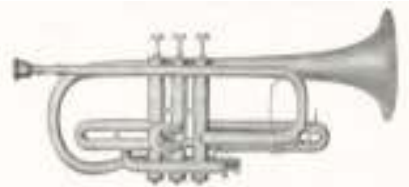
- 1914 granted patent #1,114,886 for trumpet mute



- 1916 invoice for Jay instrument has serial # in the upper 3,000s; the highest serial number with the union label found so far is #3367 on a cornet-trumpet which probably dates to this year
- 1917 Jay trombone #5875 has original paperwork from 1917
- 1918 Jay is listed all throughout 1918 in the Metal Polisher, Buffer & Platers Union periodical as involved in an ongoing strike; Fred W. Plain (1876-1944) is sec & manager, #542 W. Jackson (draft)
- 1919 Jay is not listed with the union this year
- 1920 address shown as #542 W. Jackson; Jay is living in Aurora, IL with wife Nellie and son Harold N. Jay (13)
- Catalog shows 15 different models: Long Cornet (photo 1), Vocal Cornet (2), Trumpet-Cornet (3), Trumpet (4), Alto (5), Ballad Horn (6), American & Besson model Baritones, Eb Bass, Eb Helicon Bass, 4 valve Euphonium, Mellophone (7), Slide Trombone, Valve Trombone and Combination Valve-Slide Trombone
- 1923 now listed at #546 W. Jackson; Michael E. Plain – pres; Charles F. Plain – vice-pres; Fred W. Plain – sec-treasurer; Harry B. Jay is also listed as a violin maker at the same address with his home in Aurora (census)
- 1924 new catalog has Columbia model trumpet-cornet, trumpet, Arrigoni model trumpet, vocal cornet, Eb Alto, mellophone, baritone, trombone, bass, helicon bass, Perrone model BBb bass, & Sousaphone (new); they also have ready the new Special model trombone (*MTR*)
- 1926 Harry dies in Chicago on August 25th (Find-A-Grave)
- 1929 they are moving from #542 W. Jackson Blvd to a larger factory at #1217 W. Monroe St. (*MTR*, April)



- 1930 Fred Plain is owner, band manufacturer (census)
- 1940 Fred Plain, proprietor, musical inst. repair (census)
- 1944 company probably ends with the death of Fred in Dec.



Dating Harry Jay Instruments:

1910: start of company; lowest found #572

c1916: end of Union label around #3400

1916: upper 3,000 on invoice

1917: #5875 on original paperwork for trombone

1924: new Sousaphone; lowest found #7208

The vast majority of Jay instruments that I looked at have serial numbers up to the low 10,000 range with one Columbia trumpet at #10238. After this there appears a few numbers that don't fit at all. They either developed new designs or were just stenciling their name on other horns by the end.

Trumpet #74149, a more modern design (photo 1, Horn-u-copia)

Cornet #111690, another modern design (photo 2, Horn-u-copia)

Trombone #2280xx (no photo)

It seems odd that so few higher number horns survive but perhaps in later years the company was barely surviving. Using numbered valve blocks from other companies could account for the jump in serial number.

Since the census lists the business as manufacturing in 1930 then repair in 1940, it's possible the Depression killed the factory and Fred Plain turned to repairs only.

Harry's only son Harold (1906-1988) moved to LA and may not have been involved with the company.

Other models mentioned:

1924 & 1925: Arrigoni model trumpet; no known examples; probably Ernest T. Arrigoni listed as musician in 1911 and 1923 city directories

1924 & 1925: Perrone model BBb bass; probably named for Michael Perrone, bass horn soloist for the Chicago Civic Opera Co. in 1926; no known examples

192? Costanza model trumpet (photo 3, Horn-u-copia); looks like a standard Columbia model with added first slide adjuster

c1926 Bel Canto model cornet #9100 (photo 4, Horn-u-copia); this looks like a Martin design so it's possible they started stenciling horns after Harry Jay died in 1926.

Photos from auction sales or Horn-u-copia.net unless noted.

