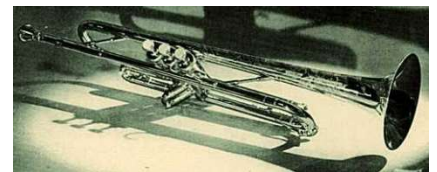


# F. E. Olds & Son

## LA & Fullerton, CA

- 1861 Frank Ellsworth Olds (photo 1) is born May 19 in Medina, NY (obit)
- 1870s Frank learns to play trombone & wants to build them (1927 Catalog)
- 1880 Frank moves to Elkhart to work for Conn (probable)
- 1885 Frank moves to Los Angeles (obit)
- 1886 Frank is listed as silver plater (voter registration)
- 1887 Frank works at the LA Tool Works (R. Dale Olson)
- 1892 Frank Ellsworth Olds, manufacturer (voter registration); works starts on making trombones (1947 catalog)
- 1896 F E Olds, manager of Pacific Cycle Co (voter registration)
- 1899 son Reginald Birdsall Olds (photo 3) is born on Sept 11 (birth cert.)
- 1900 Frank is a Locomobile agent, #206 24<sup>th</sup> St (census)
- 1910 Frank E. Olds, manufacturer of musical instruments; #206 W. 24<sup>th</sup> St, Los Angeles (census); he worked in a shop behind his home called the "barn" (Olson)
- 1912 Olds licensed trombone patent #1,021,890 by Riblet
- 1913 Olds perfects his trombone design (1927 catalog)
- 1922 Olds moves production to #1914 Raymond Ave (photo 2) (Olson); son Reginald likely starts working full time with him now [Reginald is listed as "no occupation" in the 1920 census and "student" in a 1921 passport application for a European tour but was likely put to work there whenever he was home.]
- 1924 Olds starts making ivory mouthpieces and engraving their trademark "Golden Bear" on trombone bells (Stewart); they become F.E. Olds Inc. (News Tribune, 1959)
- 1928 Olds begins the design for their trumpet (Olson); Frank dies October 9 of heart failure while on a ship (obit) and Reginald begins full management (Olson)
- 1929 Olds produces their first trumpets on February 5<sup>th</sup> (photo 4) (Olson)
- 1936 Catalog shows Standard, Self-Balancing, Military & Super model trombones, Standard, Military and the new French model trumpets, and Standard & Military model cornets.



French model #6059 c.1939

- 1939 Catalog shows Standard, Super, Featherweight, & Bass model trombones, Standard & Super model trumpets, and Standard & Radio model cornets.
- 1941 Catalog shows Special, Standard, Super, & Recording model cornets and trumpets.
- 1942-1945 Olds converts to military production of aircraft parts such as gun sights (Olson)
- 1947 Catalog shows Standard, Super & Special models of trombones, Recording, Super, Standard & Special model trumpet (in descending price order), and Recording, Super & Special model cornets.
- c1948 Olds meets with the Chicago Musical Instrument Co., a long-time distributor, about the future of Olds and the Ambassador line was developed to meet the student market demand. CMI buys a majority of Olds stock and brings Foster Reynolds (photo 2) out of retirement to run the factory. Because of him, the shop unionizes. (Olson)
- 1949 Catalog shows Recording, Super, Studio, Special & Ambassador model cornets & trumpets.
- 1951 Don Agard starts working for Olds (news article, 1979)
- 1952 Zigmant (Zig) Kanstul starts work with Olds (Olson)
- 1954 Agard has the serial numbers for all instruments merged at 100000 in January. (Olson) Production is moved 40 miles away to a new factory at #350 S. Raymond St in Fullerton, CA. Each department moved separately and there was no break in production. (Olson)
- 1959 Sousaphones have been made since 1955 and a new Flugel horn was being developed; they have 180 workers making 50 models (News Tribune article)
- 1960 Reynolds dies while working at the plant
- 1961 R. Dale Olson joins Olds in January as a designer and Director of Research to work on the trumpets (Olson)
- 1965 Reginald retires (obit.)
- 1970 Reginald Olds dies on July 9<sup>th</sup> (obit.)
- 1972 Zig Kanstul leaves Olds and leaves a large hole in management of the factory (Olson)
- 1973 CMI is purchased by Norlin Corp.; one of the cost-cutting measures tried was to reduce the number of steps in fitting the valves; this resulted in the valves being too tight and



many instruments returned; the quality issue lost them many dealers (Chuck Madera)

1974 Olds has 400 workers (news article, 1979)

1975 competition with Yamaha, reduced school budgets and problems with quality all contribute to a reduced workforce to 200 (news article, 1979)

1979 Olds production ends on July 13 and the plant closes in November; a buyer for the firm was sought but the asking price was not met; Don Agard turned out the lights for the last time on December 7<sup>th</sup> (news article & Olson)



Ambassador #595941 c.1967 (author's photo)