

Thompson & Odell, Standard Band Inst. Co., & Vega Co.

Boston, Massachusetts

- 1870 Ira Herbert Odell (1842-1928), music teacher, Boston
- 1873 Woods & Odell, music teachers, #121 Court St., Boston, with J. H. Woods (directory)
- 1874 Woods, Odell & Thompson, music teacher & musical instruments, #121 Court St.; adding Charles W. Thompson (1842-1903) (dir)
- 1875 Thompson & Odell, musical instruments, #86 Tremont St.
- 1880 Thompson & Odell now at #177 Washington & #78 Tremont (advertisement)
- 1884 Quinby Brothers musical instruments is purchased by Thompson & Odell and called Standard Band Instrument Co., #62 Sudbury St. (cornet #638 photo 2); T&O still at #177 Wash.
- 1886 T&O moves to #186 Washington
- 1889 T&O now at both #186 & #523 Wash.
- 1890 Vega Co., #223 Commercial St., guitars, mandolins, zithers, founded by Carl Linder Wilmot Nelson (1871-?, emigrated 1883) (photo 1) & brother Julius M. Nelson (1868-1920, emigrated 1889) from Sweden, other founders are John Palm & John Swenson; T&O at #523 Wash. Only (dir. & census)
- 1899 Vega Co. & SBIC still at separate addresses (dir)
- 1900 Vega Co. & Standard Band Inst. Co. are now both at #62 Sudbury St., Carl & Julius Nelson; they purchased SBIC (possibly in 1898) to add brass instruments to their offerings (dir)
- 1904 Vega acquires A.C. Fairbanks for banjos
- 1905 Thompson & Odell now at #749 Washington (dir); their band instrument business is sold to Vega
- 1915 Carl Nelson granted patent #1,165,278 for cornet telescoping tuning slide; assigned to Vega
- 1916 Vega Co., Julius Nelson pres, Carl tres (dir)
- 1917 Carl Nelson granted patent #1,232,069 for cornet telescoping lead pipe; assigned to Vega



- 1920 Julius dies in July from pneumonia; Ira Odell is retired and son Herbert (1872-?) is music store owner (census); Charles E. George (1871-1954), an orchestra musician & teacher in Boston, serves around this time as vp for Vega and has a trumpet model named for him (he receives patent #1,178,513 in 1916 for a trumpet mouthpiece)
- 1922 Vega Co. & SBIC at #155 Columbus Ave.; Herbert F. Odell & Co., music publisher, #165 Tremont room 31 (dir.)
- 1923 Vega Co., #155 Columbus (passport for Carl)
- 1925 Vega takes over the music publishing business H.F. Odell Co. (sold later in 1931) (Ayars); catalog has trumpet models Standard, Large bore & C, cornet models Supertone & Coloratura, trombone models Perfection, Standard & Orchestra Grand, Bb Baritone & bass models Bohemian Sousaphone, Sander & Thompson & Odell
- 1925 Peter Tottle granted patent #1,547,272 for valve guide design; assigned to Vega Co.
- 1926 Artistone model trumpets are selling in NYC (*MTR*)
- 1928 Vega has a new medium bore orchestra trumpet (*MTR*)
- 1929 Vega announces the new Triumphal model trumpet with streamlined shape & counter-sunk valves (*MTR*, Oct.)
- 1930 Carl has no occupation; William is Vega owner (census)
- 1936 William is Vega president, #155 Columbus Ave., 40% of business is brass instruments making all but French horns and bass brass, about 1,000 trumpets made per year with a total of 30,000 to date (Ayars)
- 1937 Carl's son William Waldo Nelson (1903-1983) is president of Vega
- 1940 William Nelson, musical inst. manager (census)
- 1948 ad for new "Power Model" trumpets used by Stan Kenton's band, #155 Columbus Ave.
- 1959 no listing for Vega in directory
- 1961 Vega Co. Inc., #155 Columbus 2nd floor, musical inst. manuf., William W. Nelson pres. (dir. & census)
- 1966 Vega Inst. Co. Inc., #40 Leon, Wm. W. Nelson pres. (dir)
- 1970 #40 Leon is vacant (dir); Vega is purchased this year by C.F. Martin Co. for their banjos
- 1983 William W. Nelson dies in Cambridge



Trombone #1493 (photo 1) & cornet #2026 (photo 2) have both Vega & SBIC inscriptions so date to after their merger. Some instruments are just "Odell" (photos 3 & 4) while others are "Thompson & Odell".

Vega models include:

Standard, #20614 (photo 1)

Charles E. George (photo 2)

Commander, #8316 (photo 3)

Advanced Triumphal, #34081 (photo 4)

Triumphal, #86808 (photo 5), this very late cornet that I owned had a very plain engraving compared to the older ones but a much better sound; Triumphal trumpet #201448 has the highest number I have come across (photo 9)

Artistone, #35539 (photo 6)

Power, #36146 (photo 7), ad says new model in 1948 although that could mean a new design of the same model

Power Special, #55954 (photo 8)

Odell, #33181 (photo 10, author's collection)

The 1936 Ayars article covering Vega states that they had made 30,000 trumpets alone by this time plus other instruments and were currently making 1,000 annually.

Trombone models share some of the same names as the trumpets and cornets with a few added such as:

1. Hankley's model with patent May 13, 1902
2. Greely model
3. A Moderne model, #148195 (bottom left)
4. Perfection (small bore, 1925 catalog)
5. Orchestra Grand (large bore, 1925 catalog)

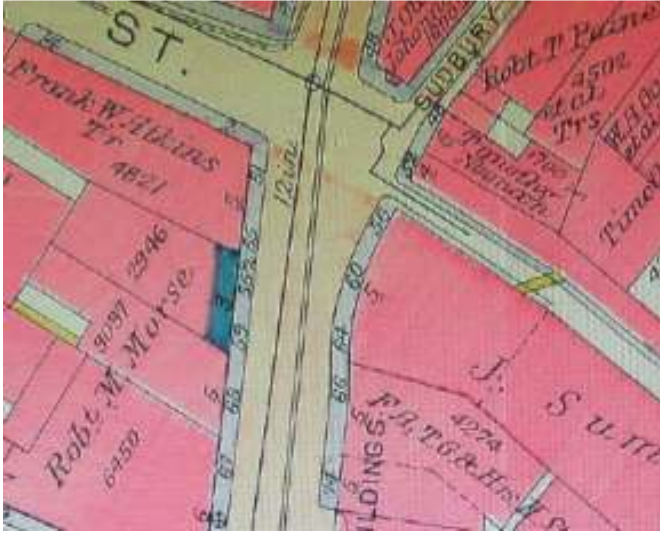
Charles E. George also sold "The Georgian" trumpet and one is found with #14675 (bottom center)

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

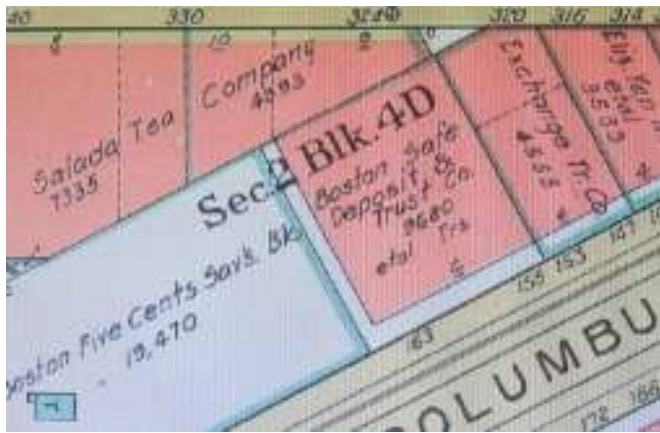


Store Locations:

#62 Sudbury Ave. (1917 map below)



#155 Columbus Ave. from 1917 on (1938 map below)



Building photo from 2017

