

J. W. York & Sons Cornets

Grand Rapids, Michigan

- 1882 James W. York (1839-1927) opens a music store in Grand Rapids
- 1885 York partners with Frank Holton (1857-1942) to start manufacturing band instruments
- 1887 Holton leaves and the name becomes JW York & Son with son Frank; these are the earliest marked York instruments found with the first ones having no serial number. The one below is a typical Courtois-style design from that period.



Here is another early York with no serial number



1890 It is estimated that York started adding serial numbers in 1890 and the lowest example I have been able to find so far is #301 below.



1898 The name changed to “York & Sons” in 1898 when son Charles (b. 1872) joins the company. This happens around serial #900 as in example #910 below.



Weldon Model

The Weldon model cornets have serial numbers in the 1100 to 2400 range which date them to the 1899 to 1900 period. These were named for well-known cornet soloist and teacher Alfred F. Weldon (1862-1914) of Chicago. York also made the Weldon model mouthpiece.



Weldon was born in Hartford, CT and moved to Chicago in 1874. He was a bandmaster for many years and by the time of the 1909 photo above, was teaching at the Siegel-Myers School of Music in Chicago. He developed the Weldon system of playing and his most famous pupil was Buhumir Kryl.

The cornets above are #1477 and #1517 (Horn-u-copia.net). The highest number found so far is #2330.

Monarch Model

The Monarch model cornets have serial numbers in the 1400 to 27000 range which date them to the 1899 to 1910 period.

#2072 c.1900



#8382 c.1904 (auction photo)



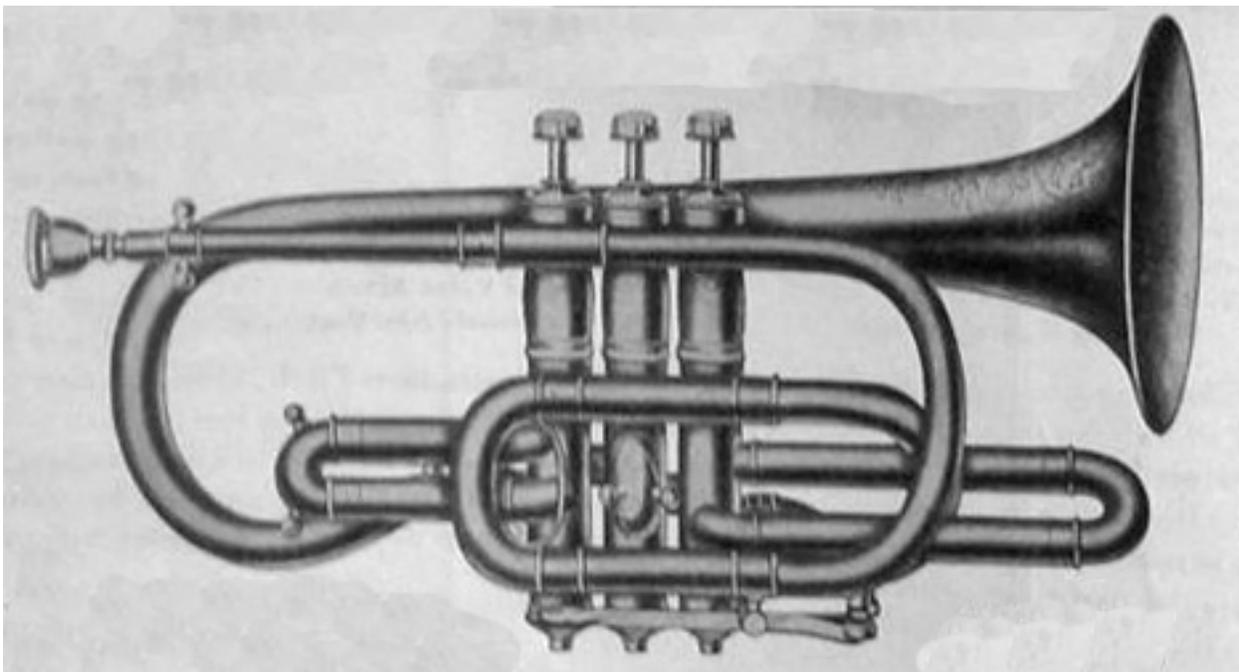
#14740 c.1906



Monarch #15378 c.1907



1910 Monarch catalog illustration



Professional Model

The Professional model cornets have serial numbers in the 7000 to 62000 range which date them to the 1903 to 1921 period. This is one of the earliest fixed lead pipe designs.

#11455 c.1905



#22416 c.1909



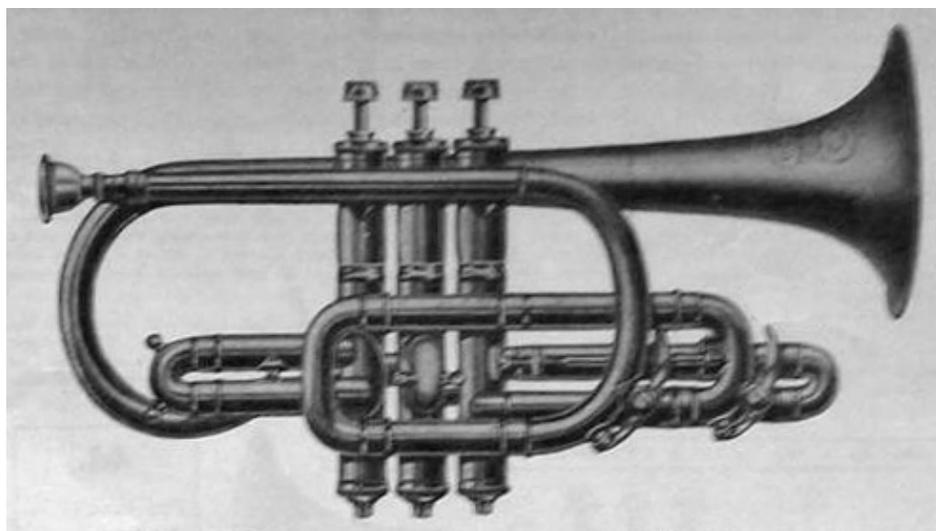
#23406 c.1909



#26465 c.1910



1910 Professional model Catalog illustration



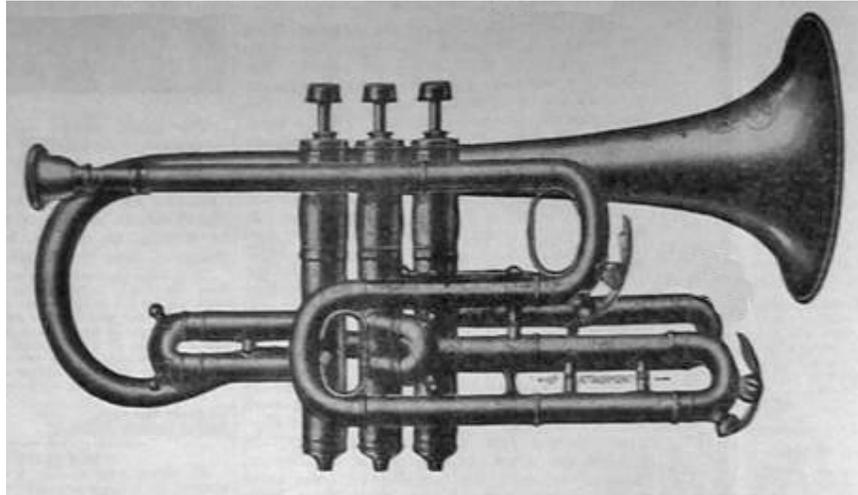
Unknown serial #



Perfect or C / Bb / A Model

The three-key model cornets have serial numbers in the 12000 to 40000 range which date them to the 1905 to 1914 period.

1910 Catalog illustration



#33233 c.1912



#38919 c.1914



New Model Monarch

The New Model Monarch cornets have serial numbers in the 20000 to 27000 range and date to the 1906 to 1910 period. They added the fixed lead pipe and quick change tuning slide to modernize the design. This model is mentioned in June of 1906 in *Music Trade Review*.

#21733 c.1910



Improved Perfect Model

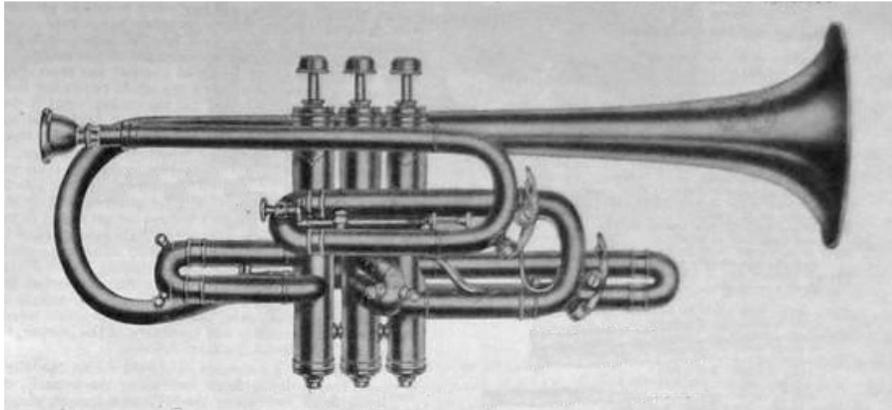
The Improved Perfect model cornet is mentioned in a June 1910 *Music Trade Review* article as having been added “some time ago”. Serial numbers are in the 23000 to 61000 range and date to the 1909 to 1920 period.

Photos needed of this model

Perfec-Tone Model

The May 1910 edition of *Music Trade Review* introduces the Perfec-Tone cornet as a new model following many months of development. These have serial numbers in the 24000 to 87000 range and date to the 1910 to 1926 period. This model was very popular and probably sold more than any other cornet.

1910 Catalog illustration



c.1911 Perfec-Tone



#24842 c.1910



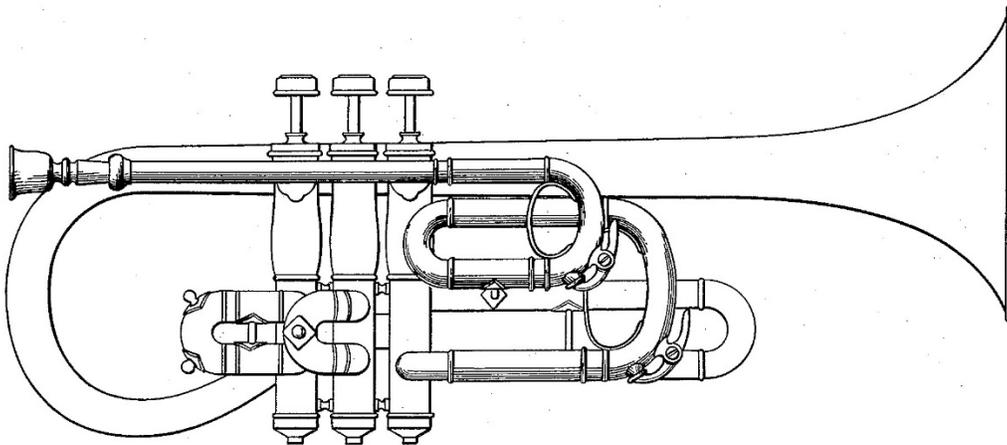
#32325 c.1912



#34123 c.1913



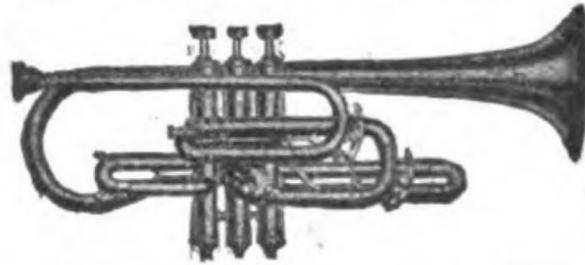
This is similar to their 1912 cornet design patent #42,914 in August.



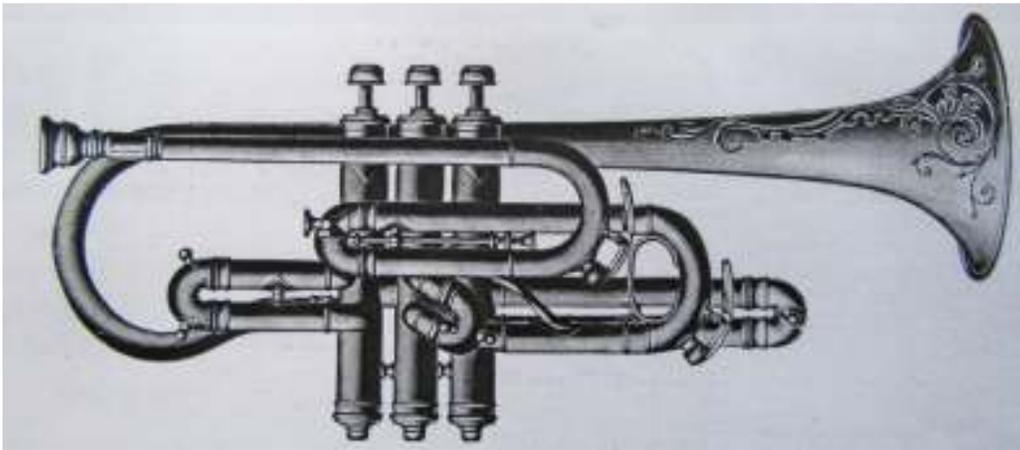
1916 Perfec-Tone Ad

Perfec-tone Cornet

Long model or Trumpet Cornet.
A beautiful, clear-toned instrument successfully combining both cornet and trumpet tones. Carrying qualities, power and accuracy of tone are really wonderful and the ease with which it is produced is remarkable. Quick change to A, and can be used in either high or low pitch. 16¾ inches long.



One evidence that this cornet was popular is that by 1912, Bohland & Fuchs of Austria had a nearly identical new long model cornet in their catalog.

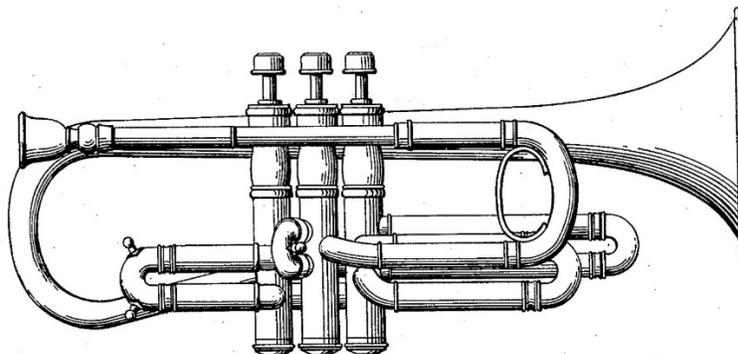


Here is an example made by B&F and sold by J. W. Pepper

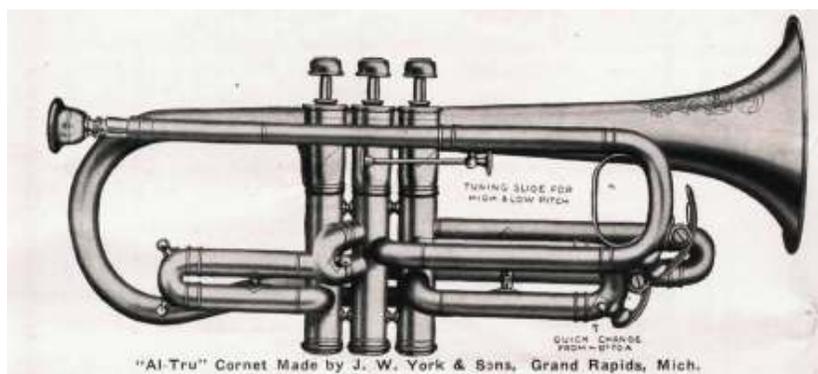


Al-Tru Model

The next patent is #45,091 dating to December 1913 for their cornet design called "Al-Tru". This was filed in May of 1913. A review of the new model in the September 1913 *Music Trade Review* says there are only two turns in the air passage, it allows a quick change to A, and comes with two special mouthpieces; shallow or deep. Serial numbers are in the 36000 to 39000 range and date to the 1913 to 1914 period.



1913 Ad Illustration – this shows the tuning adjuster rod



#36896 c.1913 – a rare surviving example



Couturier Wizard Model

Ernst A. Couturier, a celebrated cornet player, is granted patent #1,073,593 in 1913 for his continuous conical bore cornet design and develops the Wizard model with York. Serial numbers are in the 39000 to 41000 range and date to the 1913 to 1916 period. A few examples are in a different 10000 to 10100 range and may be the first ones produced.

#10012 c.1913



#40442 c.1914



#40775 c.1914

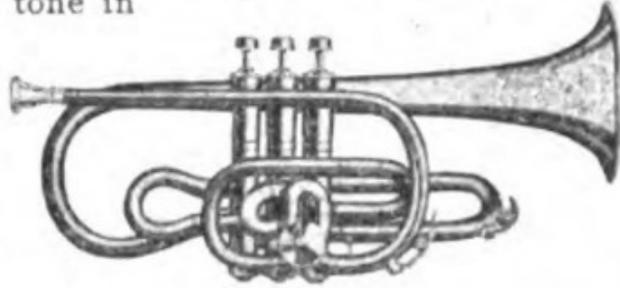


#40782 c.1914



York Couturier Cornet

Built along distinctly new lines and possesses new features not found on any other late model. Absolute perfect intonation of every tone in the chromatic scale. Its easy blowing qualities mark it as a YORK and is in direct line with the beautiful finish, perfect balance and easy blowing qualities that have made this model an everlasting favorite.



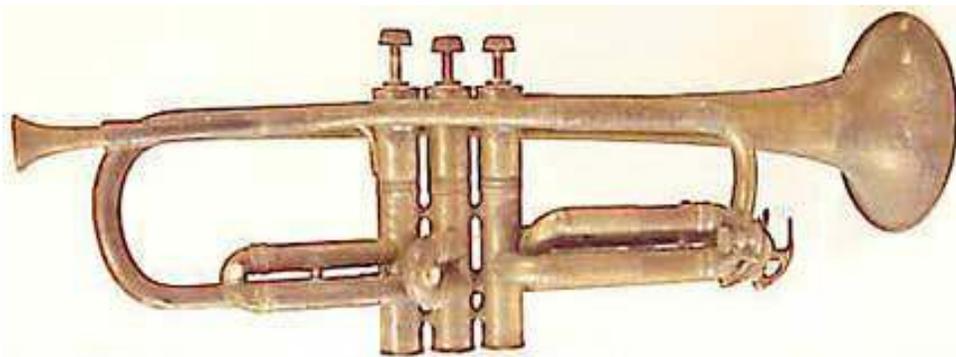
Trumpet Model Cornet

The next development was the Trumpet model cornet with serial numbers in the 66000 to 128000 range dating these to the 1922 to 1941 period. The April 1922 edition of *Music Trade Review* says that York had a new long model cornet to be available this month that had been in development for one year. These look like a trumpet but are more compact due to the extra loop in the tubing.

#786xx c.1925



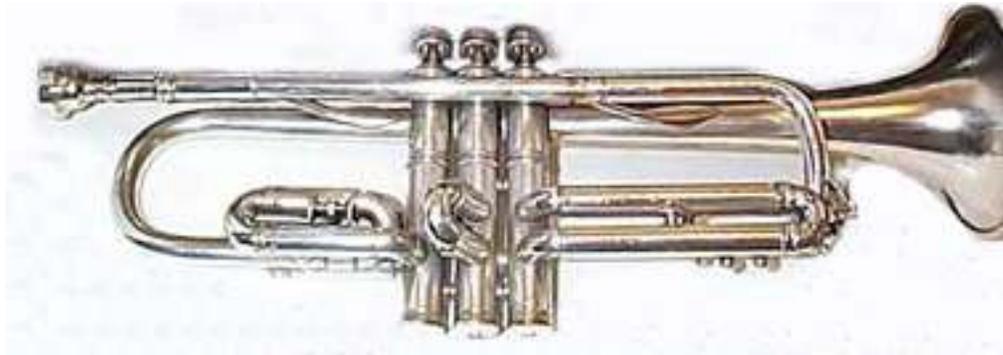
#78657 c.1925



Unknown # c.1931



#120015 c.1938 – here the 3rd slide is reversed and the loop moved to the back



Air Flow Model

The unique Air Flow model cornet is based on design patent #119,755 applied for in 1939 and granted in April of 1940. Serial numbers are in the 120000 to 127000 range dating them to the 1937 to 1941 period.

#122113 c.1939



Custom Model

The Custom model has serial numbers in the 128000 to 201000 range dating these to the 1942 to 1956 period.

#193018 c.1954



Unknown Model with Tuning Slide Lock

These cornets have serial numbers in the 132000 to 190000 range dating them to the 1945 to 1954 period. They have a twist lock on the main tuning slide.

#162113 c.1950



Grand Rapids by York

These cornets have serial numbers in the 140000 to 190000 range and date to the 1947 to 1954 period.

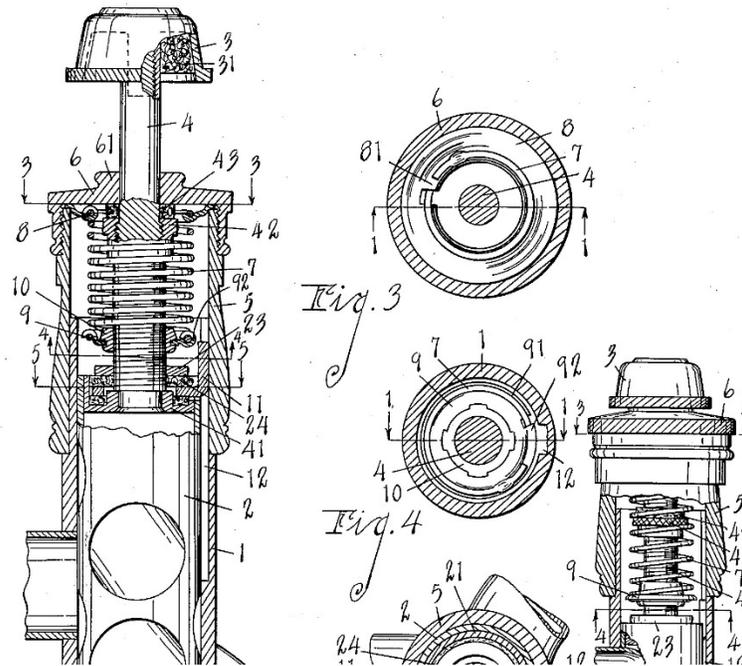
#167346 c.1951



Feather Touch Standard or Master Models

York received patent #1,922,685 for their Feather Touch valve spring design back in 1933 yet apparently waited until better times to make use of the design. Cornets with these springs have serial numbers in the 143000 to 180000 range dating them to the 1948 to 1952 period.

Patent Design – the springs are normally closed and increase in tension as you push down



#146894 c.1948



#147319 c.1948



Baronet Model

The Baronet models have serial numbers in the 160000 to 201000 range dating them to the 1950 to 1956 period.

#197796 c.1955



#199586 c.1955



Hallmark Special & Response Models

These cornets have serial numbers in the 180000 to 200000 range dating them to the 1952 to 1956 period.

Hallmark



Hallmark Response



National Model

These cornets have serial numbers in the 190000 to 250000 range dating them to the 1954 to 1963 period.

#236xxx c.1962



Super Custom

The Super Custom cornets have serial numbers dating them to the late 1950s. These are said to use valves by Blessing.

c.1956



75 Models

The 75th anniversary models have serial numbers in the 202000 to 211000 range dating them to the 1956 to 1958 period. The anniversary dates from the 1882 opening of the first store by York. Others have serial numbers in the 609000 to 641000 range.

#641039





Senator Model

These have serial numbers in the 510000 to 520000 range and probably date to the 1960s. They are marked as being made in the Czech Republic which would mean Amati in Kraslice.



Other models encountered are Vogue (c.1953), Artist (c.1954), ACME Standard (c.1956-1963), Airflow (c.1956 and not based on the 1930s design), and Superba (c.1957).

York closed the factory in 1964 and Carl Fischer sold it to Tolchin. Some instruments may have been made there later but the factory closed for good in 1971.