

Vincent Bach Corp.

NYC – Mt. Vernon - Elkhart

- 1890 Vincent H. Schrottenbach is born in Baden bei Wien, Austria near Vienna (marriage cert. & draft record).
- 1904 Bach starts studying cornet under Georg Stellwagen (Bach, 1954).
- 1910 Bach earns mechanical engineering degree in Wien (Bach, 1925).
- 1914 Bach arrives in NY on the Lusitania from Liverpool, England. Sept 12th; music hall artist (immigration); He becomes the first trumpet for the Boston Symphony Orchestra (Bach, 1925).
- 1915 Bach marries Madge Cummins in NYC in February.
- 1915 In August, *Music Trade Review* reports that, “The George Birkle Co is advertising a number of recitals at its store (in Los Angeles) by Vincent Bach, the noted trumpeter. Herr Bach became an officer in the Austrian Navy and was later taken prisoner by the British. Escaping from an English prison last autumn, he made his way to this country and finally to this city. His recitals are given at Birkle’s three afternoons each week.”
- 1915 Bach next moves back to NY to play first trumpet for the Russian Diaghilev Ballet at the Metropolitan Opera. While touring in Pittsburgh, a repairman ruins his mouthpiece and starts Bach on a quest to make a better one (Bach, 1954). He declares his intention to naturalize in June (draft record).
- 1917 Bach living with wife and brother Hans (b.1893) at #508 W. 114th St. in NY. He spent two years in the Austrian navy (draft record). He serves as bandmaster in the US 306th Field Artillery Regiment (Bach, 1954).
- 1918 Bach rents a lathe from George Bundy at a Selmer store, #11 E. 14th St, NY, for making mouthpieces (Berndt).
- 1919 Bach moves to #204 E. 85th St., NY on April 1st (*Grove’s*) (photo 1, p2).
- 1922 Bach moves to #237 E. 41st St. and incorporates (*Grove’s*) (photo 2, p2).
- 1923 Bach becomes a US citizen (*Grove’s*).
- 1924 Bach announces his new line of trumpets based on several years of experiments. They will be available in brass, silver

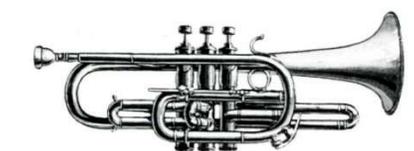
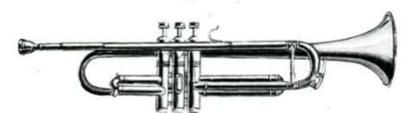
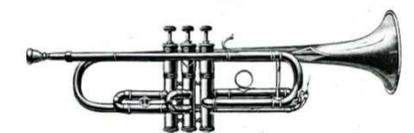
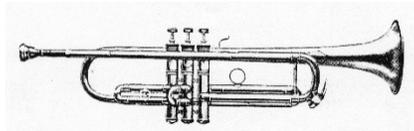
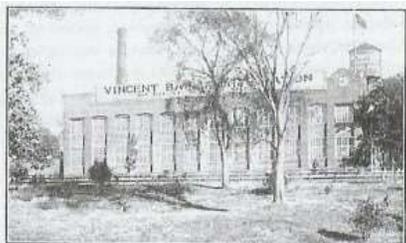


plate or gold plate (*MTR*, Oct.). Brother Hans is granted patent #1,481,855 for a leather hand protector for holding trumpets and assigns it to Vincent Bach Corp. They now have a workforce of 10.

- 1925 Bach marries Esther Staab in NY after divorcing Madge. The 1925 catalog includes Stradivarius cornets (p1 photo 2) & trumpets (p1 photos 3 & 8), Apollo cornets (p1 photo 6) & trumpets (p1 photo 7), and Mercury model trumpets (p1 photo 5).
- 1928 Bach moves to #621 E. 216th St., Bronx in October (photo 3) and adds trombones. They now have a workforce of 50 (*Grove's*). Serial number at about 1000. New piccolo trumpet in Eb & F is introduced (*MTR*, Oct 13).
- 1930 Bach is living at #300 Sheridan Ave., Mt. Vernon, NY (census).
- 1937 Bach now living at #616 E. Lincoln Ave., Mt. Vernon.
- 1939 Bach advertises a new Mercury line.
- 1941 Bach announces the new Mercedes line at a moderate price level.
- 1951 Bach now living at #53 Heightbridge Rd., Hartsdale, NY.
- 1953 Bach moves to new factory at #50 S MacQuesten Pkwy, Mt Vernon (*Grove's*). The serial number is at about 12600.
- 1958 Bach introduces the Minerva model student instruments.
- 1961 Bach sells the business to H & A Selmer Co (*Grove's*).
- 1964 Selmer moves production to an old Buescher factory at #225 E. Jackson Blvd. in Elkhart (photo 4). The serial number is at about 30000.
- 1965 Bach retires as a consultant to Selmer.
- 1967 Selmer builds a new factory for Bach production at #500 Industrial Pkwy in Elkhart. John (Jack) Feddersen, a sales manager in 1950, is pres. (Buescher #494015 sales card).
- 1990 UMI is now a part of Conn-Selmer.
- 1993 Two investment bankers acquire Bach's parent company Conn-Selmer on a leveraged buyout.
- 1995 Conn-Selmer merges with Steinway & Sons and the total workforce is reduced from 450 to 234.
- 2006 President John Stoner receives an offer from an Asian manufacturer to take over the student market. Attempted pay cuts at Bach result in a strike starting in April.



1967 Bach Stradivarius (author's photo)



Here are some notes about Bach mouthpieces told to me by former mouthpiece maker Bob Helmacy in 2020.

1. When Bach started making his mouthpieces, he didn't have a sequential series in mind but rather made copies of good player's mouthpieces and arranged them in order later. They were not a perfectly graduated size so he eventually ended up with $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{1}{4}$ sizes and no #4. (This is hearsay, not from Bach, but does bear out in analysis.)
2. Bach originally made the mouthpieces from solid rods but had too much waste so later had blanks made by Miller Automatics in Brooklyn. These blanks were also purchased by Helmacy. [Herco, Muck, Giardinelli, Parduba, Jet-Tone, Al Cass, and others are also said to have used these.]
3. A Bach 7C is not a good starter for all students as personal embouchure is a major factor in what works best for them. Helmacy feels that a 1.5 C has the best design balance of all of them.

Bach Factory Sites:

#204 E. 85th St: 1918-1923; now gone

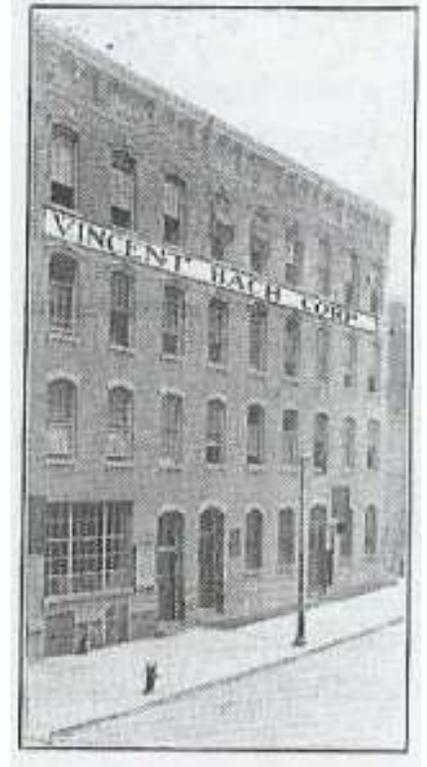


Hans Bach in 1926

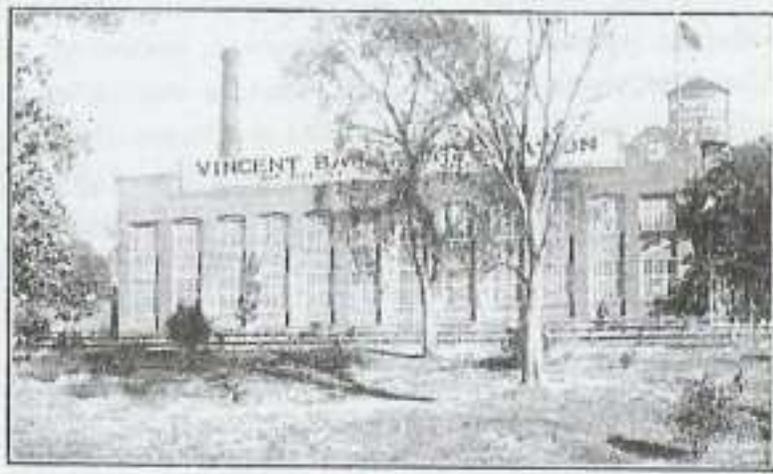


Vincent Bach in 1927

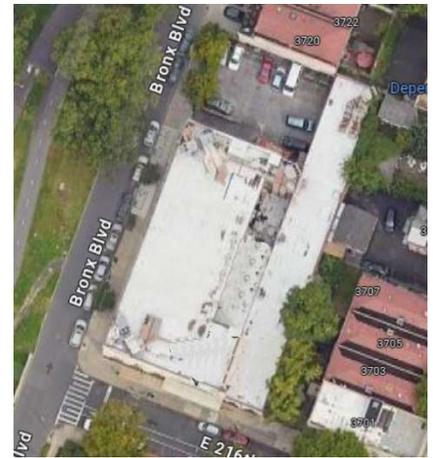
#237 E. 41st St: 1923-1928; now gone (at right, below 1926)



#621 E. 216th St: 1928-1953; now a church



2023 below and photo 2 at right



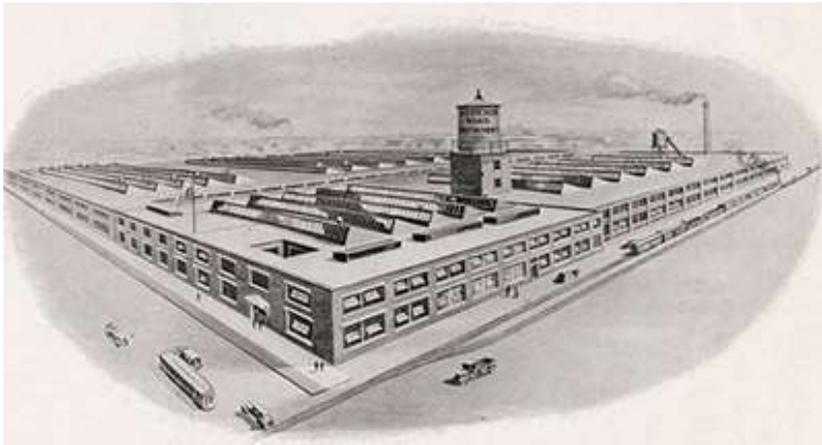
Bach in 1954

#50 S. MacQuesten St, Mt Vernon: 1953-1964



2023

#225 E. Jackson St, Elkhart: 1964-1967; This was the old Buescher plant purchased by Selmer. [now gone]



#500 Industrial Parkway, Elkhart: 1967 to present

