

Walter Emerson

Boston, Massachusetts

- 1856 Walter Macy was born on March 19th in New Bedford, MA to Sara Tobey of Nantucket (Trescott & Family Search).
- 1861 Sara married George Emerson, a leather merchant, and moved to Melrose, MA (Trescott & census).
- 1873 Walter joined Battery C of the Artillery N.V.M. as bugler and learned over 200 bugle calls (*Musical Record*, 1882).
- 1874 Walter began studying the cornet and soon mastered the instrument under Henry Brown and L. S. Batchelder of Boston (Trescott & *M.R.*). He did his first solo performance in Boston and soon after joined the Melrose Orchestra (*M.R.*).
- c1876 Walter became cornet soloist for the Boston Cadet Band when it was first organized (*M.R.*).
- 1878 Patrick Gilmore hired Walter as cornet soloist for his European tour to replace Matthew Arbuckle who could not do it (*M.R.*). He was to receive a special salary as well as a share of the profits and won great acclaim as a soloist (Trescott).
- “Walter Emerson surpassed all cornet players – he is the most brilliant player of the age.” Patrick Gilmore (*NY Herald*, 1878)
- c1879 Walter spent eighteen months with Mullaly’s orchestra at the Globe Theatre in Boston and was able to learn 300 solos played from memory (*M.R.*).
- 1880 Walter formed the Emerson Concert Company and went on tour for many years (*M.R.*). He was still living with his parents in Melrose on Lake Ave (census).
- 1881 Emerson soloed with Gilmore’s 22nd Regiment Band in New York (*NY Herald*, Feb.).
- 1882 “Mr. Walter Emerson, it is said, will soon lead to the altar a well-known soprano.” (*Music Record*, Sept 9). He was boarding at the American House in Boston (directory, below ad & at right from the *Musical Record*).



Walter Emerson, AMERICA'S GREATEST CORNETIST! Unparalleled Success

OF ANY CORNETIST.

160 Concerts with Gilmore's Band in England, Ireland, Scotland, Holland, Belgium, France, Germany and Austria.
200 Concerts at Kosfer & Bial's celebrated Garden in New York.
200 Concerts with Gilmore's Band at Hotel Manhattan, Coney Island.
250 Concerts at Hotel Nantasket, Nantasket Beach.
Besides appearing in all the principal cities and towns in the United States and Canada.

EMERSON CONCERT COMPANY,

S. R. KELLEY, Manager,
Boston Music Hall.

(200-1y)

Walter Emerson,

CORNETIST,

Managers apply at **AMERICAN HOUSE,**

[175-6m]

BOSTON, MASS.

- 1883 Walter Emerson, musician, bds Quincy House (Boston dir). He published “Emerson’s Solos for Cornet & Piano” (Ayers).
- 1883 The Emerson Concert Co. included Helen E. Carter – vocals, Charles Higgins – violin, & Miss Sheperd – piano (newspaper ad from October).
- 1883 On a Sunday evening in Syracuse, NY, following a concert on Saturday, Emerson left the hotel for a walk at 9 pm and encountered Mrs. Mary Fay, a 32 year old woman, who invited him to her house to pass the night. After getting in bed, Emerson thought he heard a noise and bounded out of bed to confront her husband hiding in the curtains. Emerson was outraged at an attempted blackmail, demanded his five dollars back from the woman, then went to the police to report them. He used the name Clark Macy and told the police captain that he was a married man and didn’t want this public. The woman was later fined for \$25 (*Rome Daily Sentinel*, Nov 19).
- 1883 “An elegant gold cornet, studded with diamonds, has been on exhibition on the window of George A. Harrington’s store today. It is the property of Walter Emerson, the cornetist, and was presented to him by C. G. Conn, the celebrated band instrument maker, of Elkhart, Ind. Mr Emerson appears at the opera house this evening.” (*Rome Daily Sentinel*, October) [This is the first evidence that he had started playing a Conn cornet.]
- 1885 Walter married Medora Henson (b.1857) who traveled with him on the concert tour and was a well-known soprano (marriage record). She was listed with the Metropolitan Opera in 1885 and 1886.
- 1885 “...next followed a solo on the cornet by Mr. Walter Emerson, the triple-tonguing in which was marvelous.” (*Eastern State Journal*, White Plains, Nov 14)
- 1888 “Walter Emerson played his ever welcome “Carnival”, but who ever heard it played like that before? The variations were taken at a fearful tempo but not a note missed. They were out in solid groups like a string of pearls and didn’t seem to be made at one time. He was encored again and again. Levy must abdicate the throne – Emerson is king.” (*Chataqua Herald*, Aug 13)

“Walter Emerson has just finished a most brilliant and heartfelt cornet polka, which he has dedicated to his friend, C. G. Conn, and named the “Connqueror.” (*Trumpet Notes*, August)



- 1889 Emerson's Boston Stars included Medora Henson-Emerson – prima donna, Rudolph King – piano, and John Thomas – humorist (*Rome Daily Sentinel*, October).
- 1890 Walter Emerson, musician, boards Hotel Edinburgh (dir)
- 1891 The Emerson Concert Co. included Minnie Babcock – contralto, Bertha Webb – violin, Mae Fowler – reader & Edwin M. Shonert – piano (October ad). [Medora may have separated with Walter by this time as her last listing was earlier in 1891.]
- 1892 The Walter Emerson Concert Co. started their 12th annual tour managed by Spencer Apollonio and performed by Emerson on cornet, Edwin Thonest on piano, Edith Smith as reader, Harrita Cheney as soprano, and Florence Cook on Violin (*NY Clipper*).
- 1893 Emerson was granted a divorce from Medora based on a charge of infidelity with pianist Waddington Cook, who she had met in London (*NY Times*, May 10th).
- 1893 Emerson died suddenly on June 1 at the Hotel Edenburgh in Boston due to severe peritonitis. His address was #261 Columbus Ave (death certificate).

Herbert Clarke once said of Emerson:

“I had the good fortune to hear Emerson back in the eighties, when he was head of his own concert company. I admired not only his beautiful tone quality, fine facility of technique and his pure virtuosity, but also for his fine stage presence. Moreover he was a fine looking man as well.”

Emerson Cornets:

“Walter Emerson preferred and used a large bore cornet, and when he played it indoors the windows would fairly rattle. I had his cornet in hand once when I met him in my home town. It was made to his special order by Antoine Courtois of Paris, France and I recollect that the maker's brand was finely engraved in lieu of being stamped on as is done on regular imported instruments of that house.” (C. W. Warren, *Musical Messenger*, Jan 1917) [In photos he appears to be holding a Courtois-style cornet.]

“He had his cornets made to order by Antoine Courtois of Paris, France. They were large bore and became known as the Emerson model.” (Trescott)

“I wonder if Mr. Warner knows where Walter Emerson's old Courtois cornet is? It is, or was until recently, owned in New Bedford, Mass and at the time when I saw it could not



WALTER EMERSON.

be bought for love of money, although my personal opinion of it was that there were many as good, and some better. However, it was Emerson's, and that settled it!" (The Critic, *Musical Messenger*, Feb 1917) [The original is said to be the one at the National Music Museum and has a 0.474" bore and 5" bell.]

"I never knew anything as to the whereabouts of Walter Emerson's Courtois cornet. How well I remember Mr. Emerson after all these years." (C. W. Warner, *Musical Messenger*, April 1917)

"For Sale – Emerson's Courtois Cornet – Will Trade for Horse" (article from America's Shrine to Music Museum Newsletter 25, #3, May 1998, pp 4-5)

Courtois cornet #16793 (c1889, photo 1 from Horn-u-copia.net) is an Emerson model (see also photos 3 & 4 page 2 courtesy Josh Landress); #17270 is also an Emerson (photos 1-3, page 3 courtesy Josh Landress)

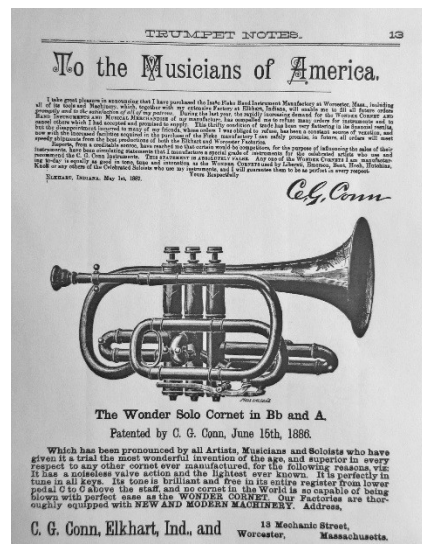
Cornet #16268 is the lowest serial number found for this group of Emerson models (Niles Eldridge collection)

The Levy, Arbuckle & Emerson models were all externally identical and only differed in their bore size with Levy the smallest and Emerson the largest. The Arban model was not stamped but it had the lead pipe going between the branches of the third slide. (matching photo 1 on page 1)

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1888 Emerson is listed in this Conn ad (photo 3) as using the Wonder model cornet (*Trumpet Notes*, August 1888)

Conn also made an Emerson model cornet mouthpiece (photo 2)



Emerson Band Instrument Company

In 2018 I purchased this Courtois Levy's model cornet with a last award date on the bell of 1900. It has an added engraving for Emerson Band Instrument Co, Boston, sole New England agent. I have found nothing in the Boston city directories for this company and have not been able to determine if this is related to Walter or not. It would have been made after his death so perhaps someone in his family was using the name to promote sales.

I would like to hear from anyone who has more information on this company.

Email jrpatton68@gmail.com

