

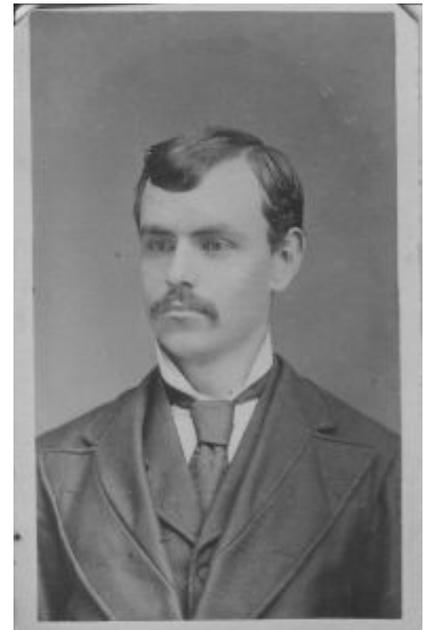
Frank Holton & Co.

Chicago & Elkhorn

- 1857 Frank Ezra Holton is born in Allegan, MI.
- 1870s Holton apprentices as a blacksmith in Allegan.
- 1879 Holton marries Florence in Allegan.
- 1880 Holton in Kalamazoo working as a blacksmith for Cahill & House making carriages (photo 1).
- 1883 Holton wins first prize for a trombone solo in a state tournament in Detroit.
- 1885 Holton partners with James York to form York & Holton in Grand Rapids, MI, #57 Canal St. (dir.) This ends in 1886.
- 1892 Holton joins the Sousa band as a trombone player.
- 1896 Holton is with Brook's Second Regiment Band in Chicago and starts selling a slide oil that he developed.



- 1898 Holton rents a third-floor room in a building at the corner of Clark & Madison St. selling oil, musical supplies, and used instruments. It opens on March 1st (obit.).
- 1899 Holton produces his first instrument; the "Special" trombone.
- 1900 Holton moves to larger quarters renting two rooms at #70 Madison St. at corner of State. He adds cornets to his line (#318 at right from c.1901). Florence is a music teacher.
- 1902 Holton at #70 E. Madison St., band instruments (dir). He now has 14 workers.
- 1904 Incorporates as Frank Holton & Co., moves to #107 E. Madison St, rents a full floor (Holton). [Cornet #316 has case banner marked "Frank Holton & Co. 104 E Madison"]
- 1906 Holton now has 100 workers and is building a new factory at #2638-2646 Gladys Ave (bottom photo from c.1915).



1907 The first half of the factory is running. E. A. Couturier starts working with Holton to promote the Couturier model cornet (photo 1).



1909 Introduction of the Holtonphone tuba (photo 2). Holton is granted patent #932,704 for a trombone design.

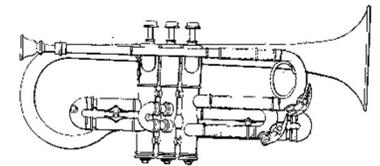
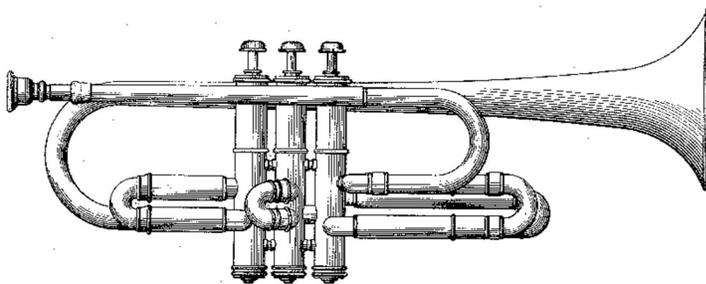


1911 The second half of the factory is finished. Frank Holton & Co., #2638-2646 Gladys Ave. & third floor #207 S. Wabash Ave., Holton pres, Arthur Davis sec, Harold DeBray tres (directory).

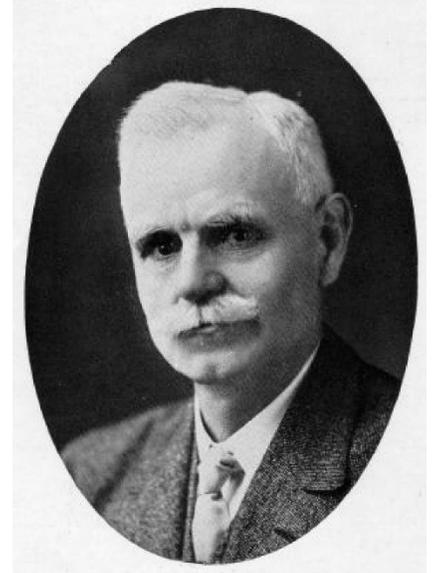
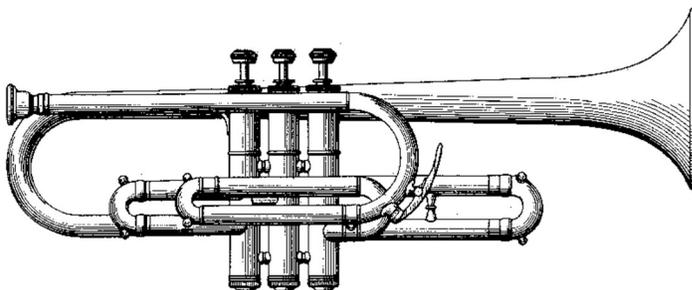
1911 Holton granted patent #1,005,972 for his "New Proportion" cornet developed back in 1906 (photo 3 & below).



1914 Holton granted patent #1,089,876 for mouthpiece and design patent #46,501 for the "Revelation" cornet.

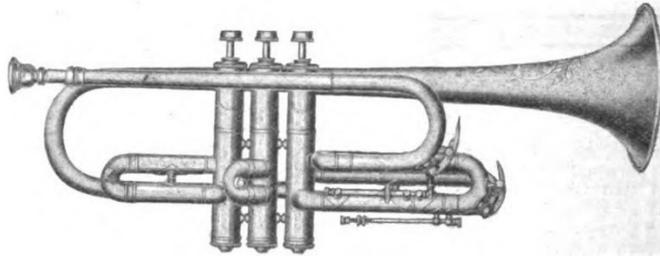


1915 Holton granted design patent #48,319 for cornet (below).



1916 Holton is granted patent #1,236,173 for trombone counter-balance & starts advertising the "Revelation" cornet & trombone (below & right).

THE HOLTON REVELATION



Has now been on the market and in use by many of the real cornet players for about a year and is even a better instrument than when first put out, for the reason that through the assistance of our many friends among the great cornetists of this country slight changes have been made that have brought it still nearer perfection.

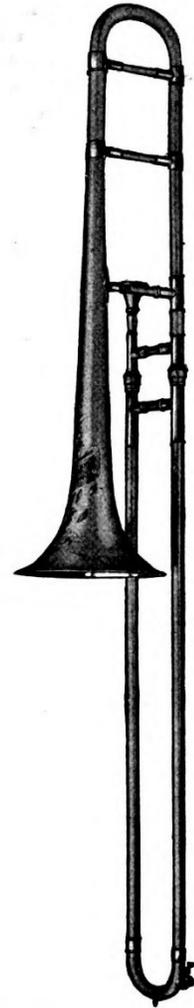
Send for free copy of the "Musical Melange," written by the gifted Elbert Hubbard, just before he sailed on the ill-fated Lusitania.

Information about all HOLTON instruments upon application.

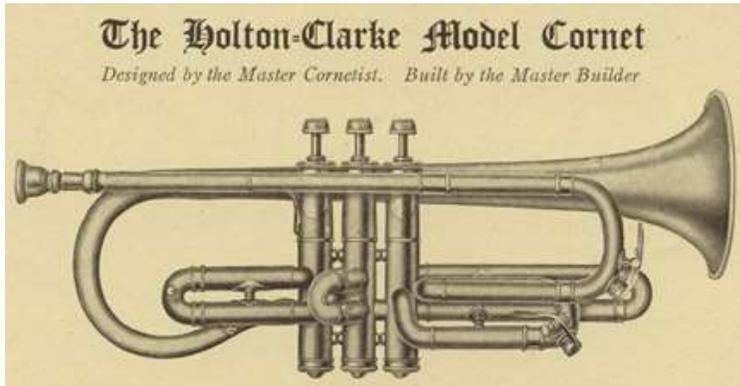
FRANK HOLTON & COMPANY

Make High Grade Instruments
Only

2638 Gladys Avenue, Chicago



1918 Holton moves to the new factory at #320 N. Church St. in Elkhorn, WI in April. They have 200 workers and moved 85 carloads of machinery. The Herbert Clarke model cornet is introduced based on the New Proportion design.



1919 Start of "Revelation" trumpet design.

1920 Holton granted patent #1,330,806 for trumpet tuner and #1,330,831 for trombone slide.



HERBERT CLARKE
*The World's
Premier Cornetist*

1920 Holton introduces the "Revelation" trumpet.

Announcing

The Holton Revelation Trumpet

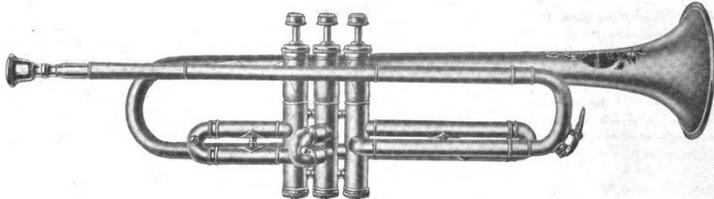


Illustration Shows Trumpet Built in Low Pitch Only

A Wonderful Advance
A Realization of the Possibilities of the Trumpet

Concealed Quick-change to A

The beautiful Lines of this Trumpet command instant attention. Note the elimination of unsightly braces.

In no instrument has the famous Holton workmanship shown to such marked advantage.

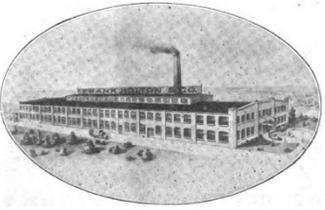
Phosphor Bronze Valves

Since 1898 Holtons have been built under the personal supervision of Frank Holton, the Master Builder.

Built to the highest standard ever set in the band instrument industry, Holtons are the recognized quality.

THE LARGEST EXCLUSIVE MAKERS OF STRICTLY HIGH-GRADE BAND INSTRUMENTS

Frank Holton & Co.



Elkhorn Wis.



- 1921 Holton granted patent #1,512,023 for trumpet tuner.
- 1922 Holton begins a factory addition in May (MTR).
- 1923 Over 300 workers & newly doubled factory space (MTR).
- 1924 Holton granted patent #1,652,306 for trombone tuner.
- 1920s Holton stencils some less expensive "Pertin" & "Beaufort" instruments for students (photos 7 & 8).
- 1928 Lyon & Healy close their Couturier plant in LaPorte and send all the tooling to Holton under a new contract to produce their band instruments (MTR, March 3).
- 1929 Holton introduces the "Collegiate" student models.
- 1934 Holton granted patent #2,027,340 for trombone slide.
- 1939 Holton retires and sells controlling interest to Fred Kull (1872-1944). He is still chairman of the board (obituary).

- 1939 Holton now down to 106 workers.
- 1942 Frank Holton dies on April 16 of a heart attack (obit.).
- 1943 Frank Holton Co. incorporates on 12/2 (opencorporates).
- 1944 Fred Kull dies and is succeeded by his brother Grover Kull (1885-1977) and former sales manager Elliot Kehl.
- 1956 The Farkas model French horn is new (photos 1 & 2).
- 1962 Elliot Kehl is the owner (Larry Ramirez).
- 1964 Controlling interest is sold to Leblanc Co.
- 1982 Leblanc registers the Holton name on 10/12 with first use given as December 1904 (US Trademark office).
- 1992 The Frank Holton Co is dissolved on 1/6 (opencorporates).
- 2004 Holton is sold to Conn-Selmer for \$544,600 (tax record).
- 2008 All production in Elkhorn ends at the end of summer with 70 workers left. Production continues in the old King plant in Eastlake, Ohio.
- 2017 There was no plan for remediation of the site at this time (City meeting records, 2/2/17).

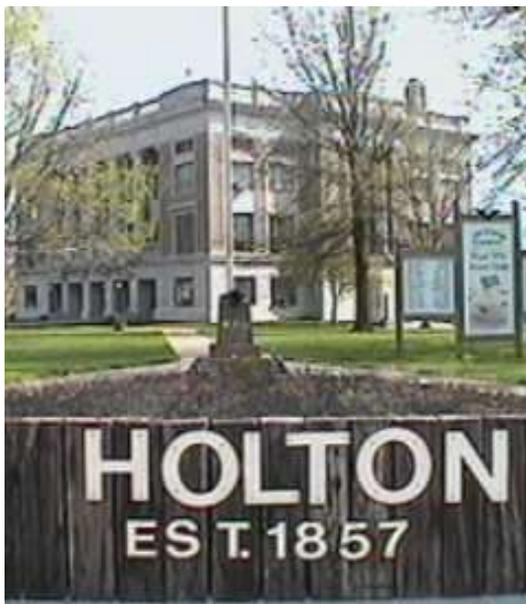
Elkhorn Factory: aerial view in 2017



Holton cornet #316 with "Frank Holton" on the bell and "Frank Holton & Co / 107 E. Madison St / Chicago" on banner.

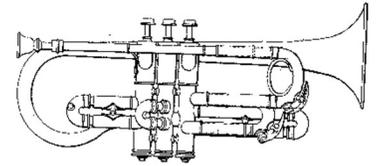
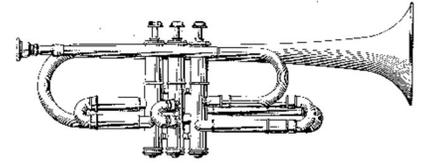
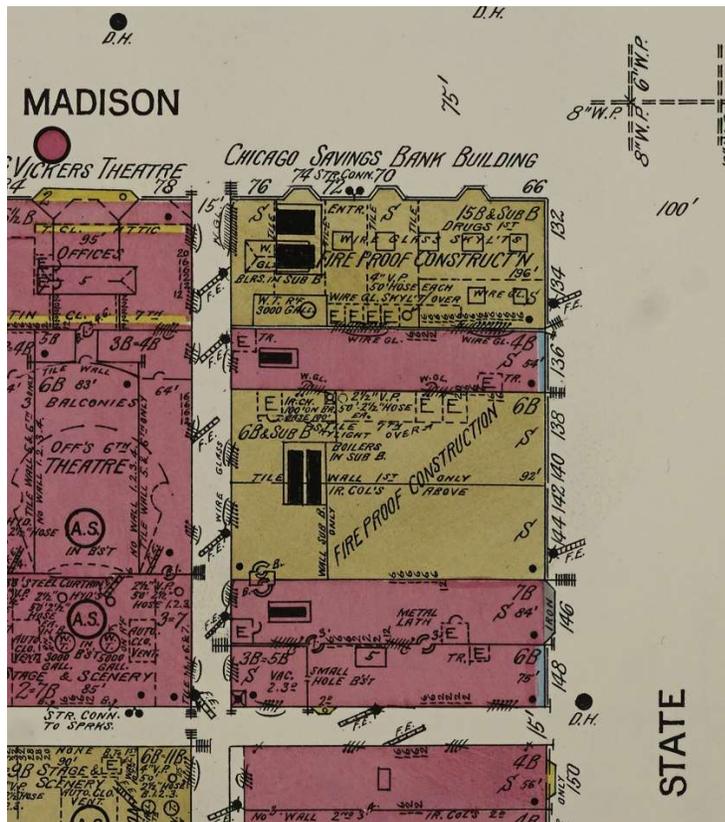


Photos from internet auction. Below from c.1980.

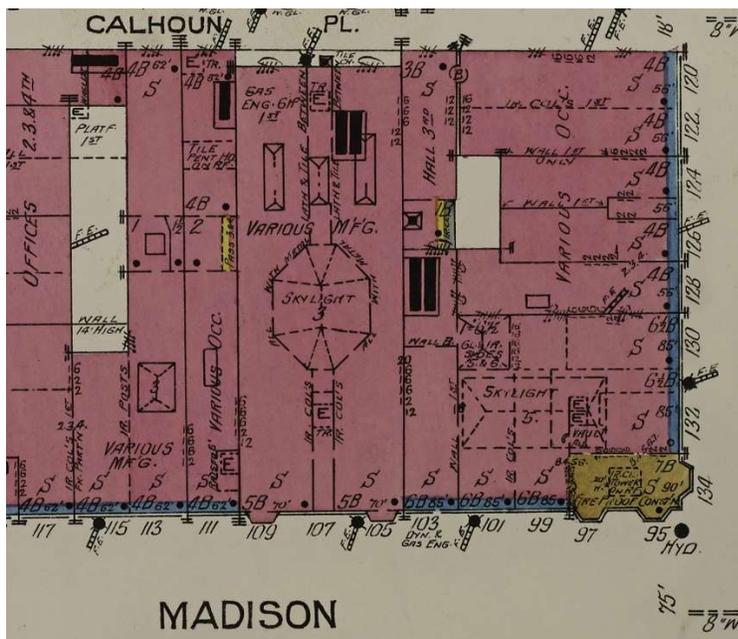


Holton Factory Locations:

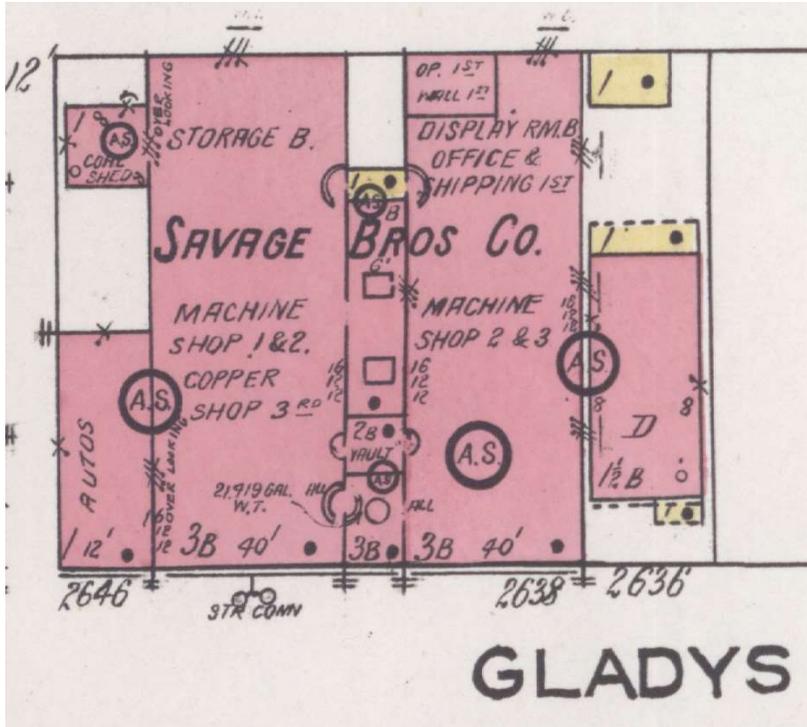
70 East Madison: This was at the corner of State St and the location where the first instruments were made after Holton moved here in 1900. In this 1904 Sanborn map below, it's the center entrance at the bank building.



107 East Madison St: Holton ran out of space and rented an entire floor here starting in 1904. Business was so good that in two years, he decided to build a new factory. This Sanborn map below is from 1904 and lists it as "Various Mfg".



2638 - 2646 Gladys Ave: Holton built a new factory here in 1906 and not long after doubled the size due to demand. By the late teens, this was already getting too small, and he started looking for a new location. This 1922 Sanborn map below shows that he sold the building to Savage Bros. Co, a machine shop, and this matches well with the 1912 image at the top right. In 2023, this was an empty lot.



1919



1920



1925



320 North Church St, Elkhorn, WI: This final factory was built in 1918 with additions in 1922 and 1968, according to tax records. The main building was designed by architect James R. Law and the 1922 addition by Martin Tullgrew & Sons. 2017 view below.



Why Elkhorn? A 1917 *Musical Messenger* article says that Holton had a dairy farm there.