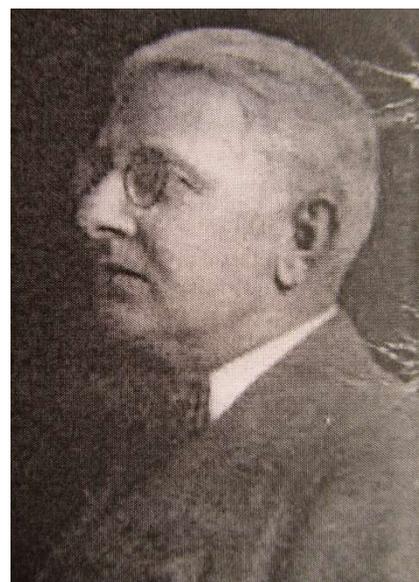


Buescher Band Instrument Co.

Elkhart, Indiana

- 1861 Ferdinand August (Gus) Buescher (ph. 1) is born in Ohio.
- 1876 Buescher starts working for Conn-Dupont in Elkhart.
- 1880 Augustus Buescher (b.1822), music teacher; son August (b.1861 in Brunswick, Ohio), horn factory worker (census).
- 1888 Buescher (pr. bisher) becomes a foreman for Conn.
- 1890 August Buescher, works for Conn & manufactures band emblem charms, res. Pacific; F. August Buescher, Buescher & Reid, agents Davis sewing machines, stationary, Main St., res. Park St. (city directory).
- 1893 Small wood frame shop on Jackson St has sign "1893 F.A. Buescher Band Instrument Maker" (later catalog sketch).
- 1894 *The Buescher Manufacturing Co. is established with FAB, John Collins (1860-1923), & Harry L. Young (1842-?) at 1119 N. Main St. They use the "True-Tone" name.
- 1895 Buescher now at #111 Pacific (August's residence).
- 1896 Factory at corner of W. Beardsley & Ward. Formerly the Clause Printing Press Co. (Sanborn map; photo 4).
- 1900 Buescher is supposed to be the first maker to use the fixed lead pipe on the cornet.
- 1901 Buescher is granted patent #670,365 for "Epoch" model cornet. A fire destroys the foundry section of the factory and the Sanborn map says they are to move to 1120 N. Main in the fall into a new factory.
- 1903 A failure of the Indiana National Bank caused Buescher Mfg to fail since they were a heavy borrower. The factory was currently shut down (*MTR*, Nov 30).
- 1904 The defunct Buescher Mfg Co will resume as the Buescher Band Instrument Co (*MTR*, April 30). They incorporate on July 2 with \$10,000 capital under FA Buescher & John H. Collins (*MTR*, July 2). A new factory at 211 E. Jackson is owned by J. W. Fieldhouse.
- 1906 Buescher granted patent #826,473 for multi-pitch tuning slides. They join the metal workers' union in December.
- A new factory expansion is planned (*MTR*, Feb 24).
- 1907 Buescher granted patent #869,619 for the Split-No-Tone bell. An ad in the metal workers' Journal announces the new model 7 Epoch cornet and that all future instruments



will bear the union label. A financial depression this year shuts the factory almost completely before gradually coming back to four-day weeks (*The Journal*, Jan 1908).

- 1908 1,500 instruments are built this year (1910 catalog). An ad in January announces the new #10 cornet model.
- 1909 Buescher's first wife Glendora dies. An addition doubles the Jackson St. factory. 3,000 instruments made in 1909.
- 1910 Located at #225 East Jackson; 100 factory workers.
- 1911 Buescher marries Margaret (25), a factory bookkeeper. The metal workers' union announces in February that Buescher has dropped support.
- 1912 Robert Middleton is granted patent #1,060,779 for a trombone tuning slide with assignment to Buescher.
- 1913 Buescher is now back on the union label list.
- 1916 Buescher is on the metal workers' strike list since February when 500 workers all over the country walked out. The main force behind this is Carl Greenleaf of Conn. All union labels should stop at this time.

The Buescher BIC is looking for a new factory site with a capacity of four times the current one. "Mr. Buescher has about completed arrangements to install machines in the building over the Smith Furniture Co. store on West Franklin St. He says he will put at least 60 men to work in this place" (*MTR*, June 5).

Conn owners have purchased the stock of Buescher from FA Buescher, his wife, and John Collins for \$175,000. The buyers include Andrew Beardsley (1864-1936) (photo 2, p.1), Carl Greenleaf (photo 1), W. H. Foster, and J. A. Bell of Elkhart (*Music Trade Review*, Nov 7).

- 1919 Beardsley becomes president and Buescher vp & gm. New model 9 Buescher-Grand trumpet. Greenleaf & Beardsley incorporate the Elkhart Band Instrument Co. in September as a subsidiary for lower-priced horns.

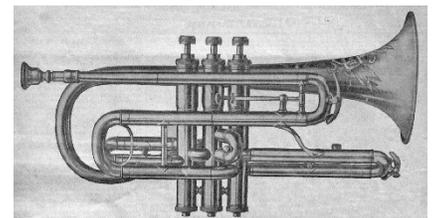
Land south of the factory was purchased in July and a new addition will be running by early 1920 with 600 workers. The factory has expanded to E. Lexington (*MTR*, Dec 27).

- 1922 New model 10-22 trumpet (catalog). Elkhart BIC starts sax production on Main St (McKnight).
- 1923 New plant addition partially occupied by Nov. and is the third one in four years, bringing the total to 75,000 sf. [A December *MTR* article states the new factory space is



123,000 sf.] 650 workers expected to expand to 800 & annual sales to hit \$2M. Most of their plating is done by two plants in Chicago (*MTR*, Oct). Secretary-treasurer John Collins (b.1859) dies. Elkhart BIC moves to Plum St.

- 1926 Buescher is granted patent #1,601,555 for a short-stroke valve design.
- 1927 Otis Beers (1894-1974) (photo 3, p.1) is assistant manager. Buescher is granted patent #1,624,310 & #1,647,079 for trombone slides. Elkhart BIC adds more instruments.
- 1928 Elkhart BICo merges with BBICo & moves to the Buescher factory. New model 212 Professional trumpet (catalog).
- 1929 Buescher resigns as vp & gm but is retained as consultant.
- 1929-1932 Buescher is president of Johnson & Biddle Tool Co.
- 1930 US census lists Buescher with no occupation. Otis Beers is manager at Buescher.
- 1931 New Aristocrat models & Maestro cornet (catalog).
- 1932 Buescher partners with Harry Pedler on July 23rd to form the Art Musical Instrument Co. BBIC replaces the "True-Tone" model with the "Custom" & "Aristocrat" models.
- 1934 Otis Beers is granted patent #1,951,267 for an offset trombone slide with assignment to Buescher Co.
- 1935 Andrew Beardsley president; Otis E. Beers GM.
- 1936 Beardsley dies & Beers becomes president & GM.
- 1937 Gus Buescher dies on November 29th from a heart attack. Elkhart BIC starts the Windsor line (McKnight).
- 1938 Otis Beers is granted patent #2,113,502 for angled trombone slide braces with assignment to Buescher Co. New 400 series brass & Duo-cup mouthpieces (catalog).
- 1938 Edward Todt is granted patent #2,132,329 for the new valve block design with assignment to Buescher Co.
- 1939 The new Micromaster valve is introduced. Selmer starts the Bundy line using Elkhart BIC stencils (McKnight).
- 1943 Production is reduced during wartime but they had a contract to make altimeters for the US government.
- 1950 Elkhart starts "Built by Buescher" engraving (McKnight).
- 1958 Carl Greenleaf installs son Charles as president (P. Perez).
- 1959 The Elkhart line of instruments ends and the Windsor name is used by Buescher (McKnight).



1963 The Buescher Band Inst. Co. is sold to Selmer. Some brass instruments with the Buescher name were then made by Boosey & Hawkes.

1964 Selmer buys Bach and production moves to the Buescher plant.

1983 The Buescher brand is retired by Selmer with serial numbers around 875000.

The Buescher Factories:

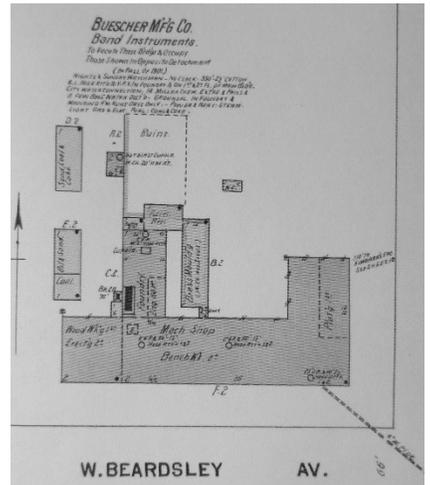
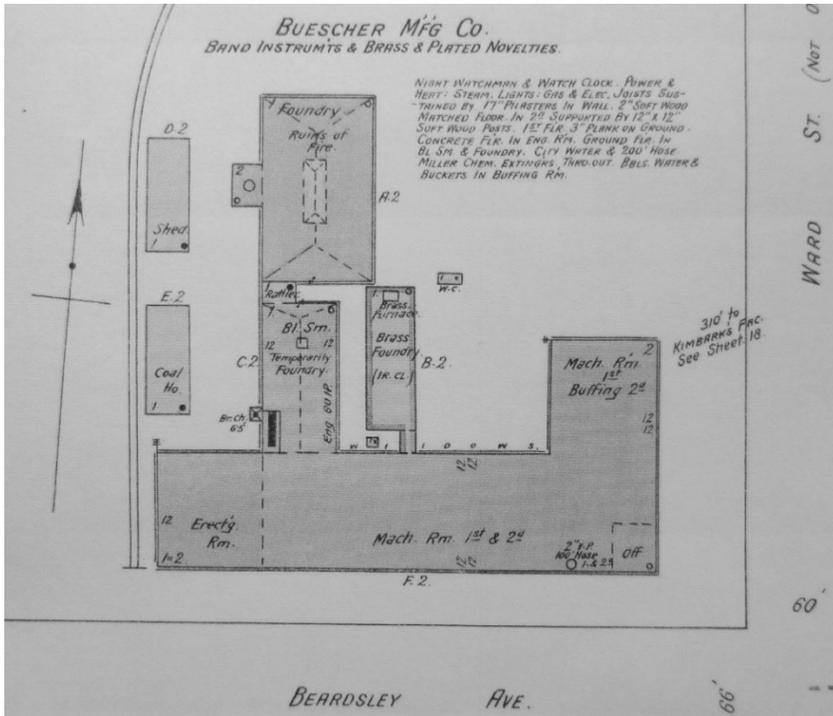
1893 This small store at the right is an illustration of the original shop on Jackson Street. I could not find this marked on any Sanborn maps of the period.



1896 The earliest map I could find of the Buescher factory is from an 1896 Sanborn map showing it at the corner of Beardsley Ave & Ward Street. [1100 W. Beardsley Ave] This was the former Clause Printing Press Co. and the 1892 map shows just the L-shaped building so Buescher must have added the foundry buildings. The main factory measures 50' x 220'.



1896 Sanborn map below and 2020 view photos 2 & 3 at right.



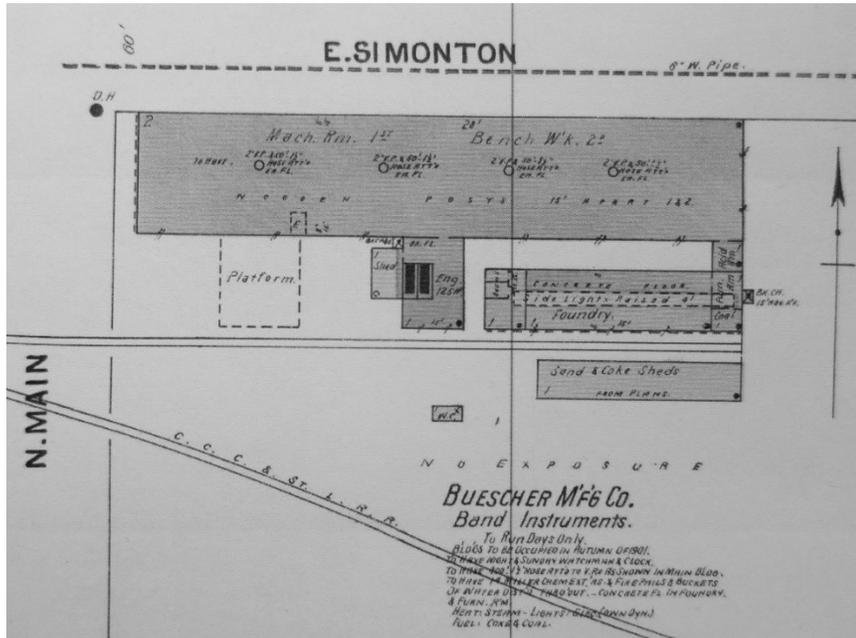
1901 Still at the same site but the map indicates that they will be moving in the fall. Not much of a change except for removal of the burned foundry building on the north side (photo 4 at right).

1901 The Sanborn map indicates that this new factory was to be occupied by the Fall. It measured 60' x 330' and had its own railroad siding for fuel delivery. This move allowed them to go from 22,000 sf to 40,000 sf of space (photo 5).



This building is located at 1120 N. Main St and in 2020 was the headquarters of Dometic Corp.; greatly enlarged by now. Photo 5 (last page) shows a current view from the corner and the larger white rectangle in photo 1 is the original building.

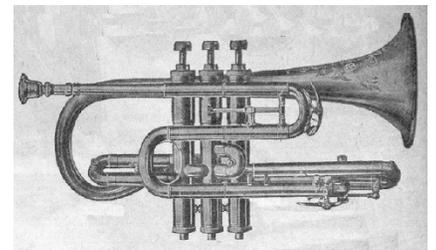
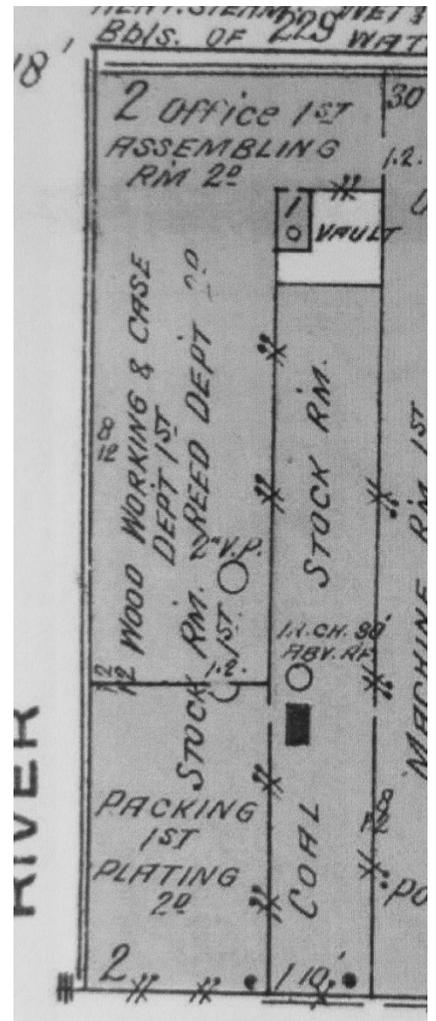
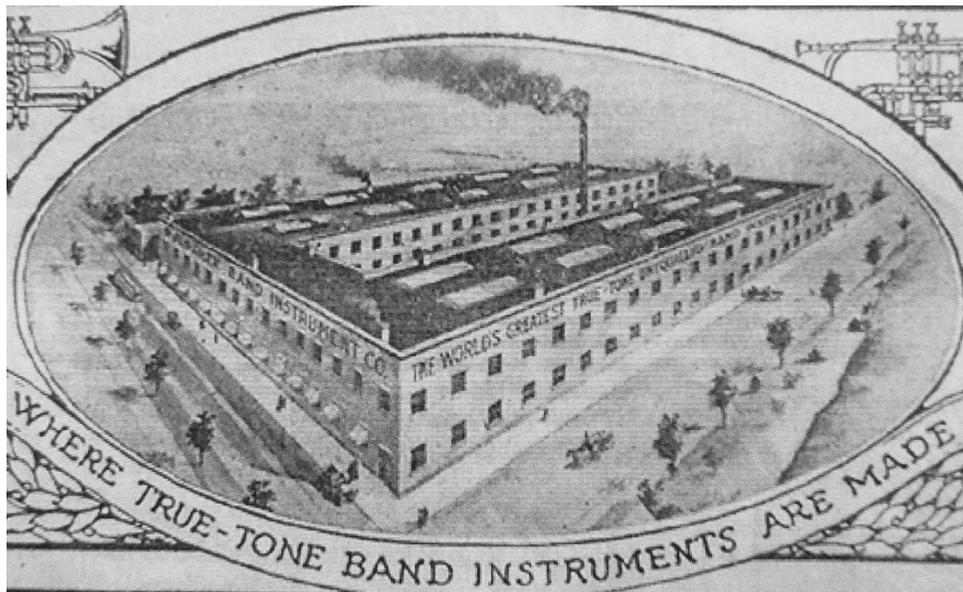
1901 Sanborn map of the new factory below



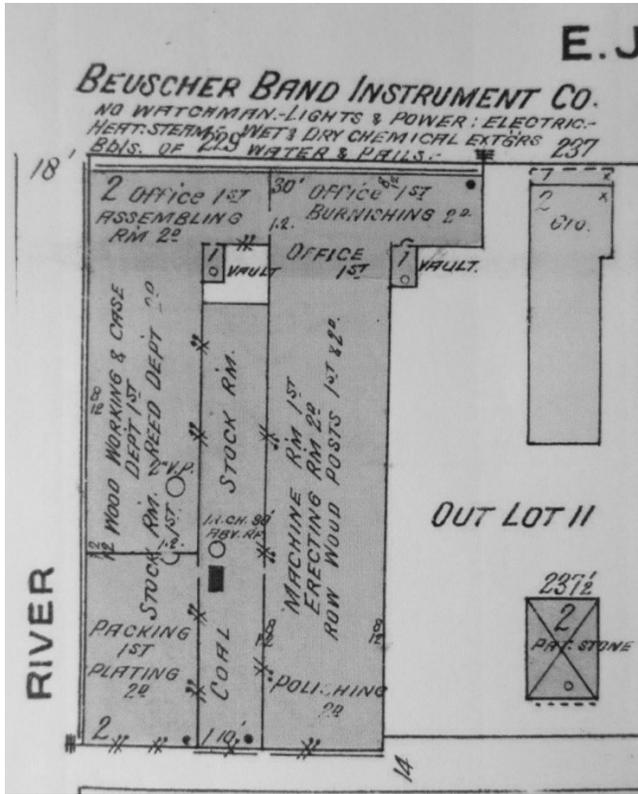
1904 Buescher now hits financial troubles, forcing a move to a much smaller new factory at 225 East Jackson, which measured 30' x 150'. This dropped them back to around 10,000 sf. (photo 2)

1906 The factory expands this year.

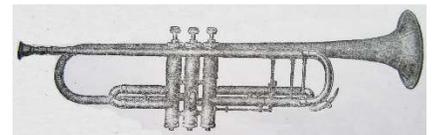
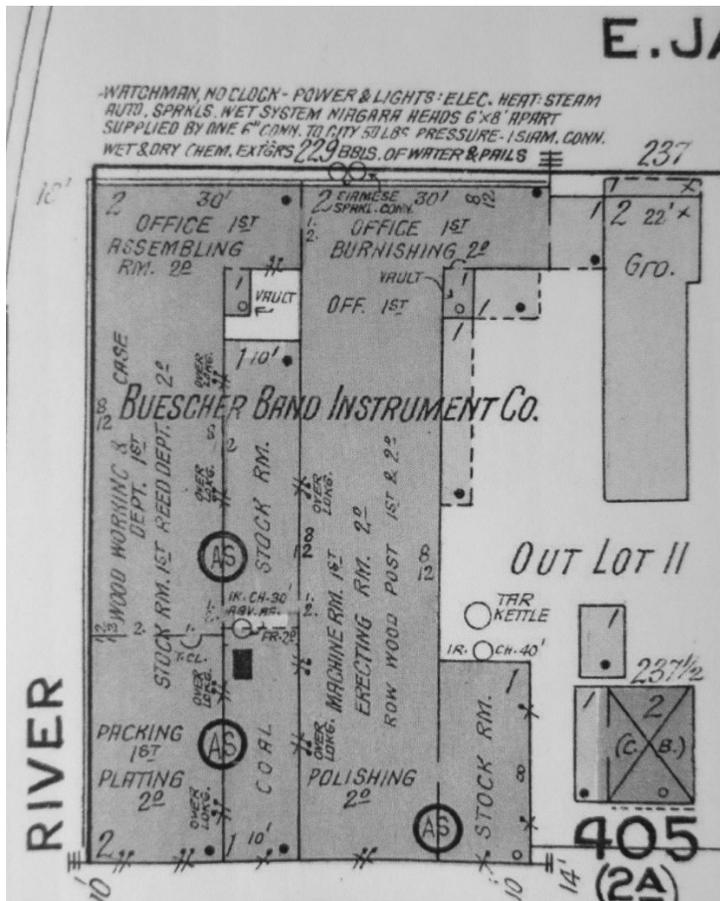
1909 This catalog image shows the factory at #225 E Jackson. They had doubled the factory with an addition this year, which is the section in the back of this image. This enabled them to increase production to 3,000 for the year.



1910 This Sanborn drawing shows the 1909 addition to the right. They had 100 workers this year.



1917 Seven years later they had only done some minor additions including a stock room (Sanborn Fire Insurance map).

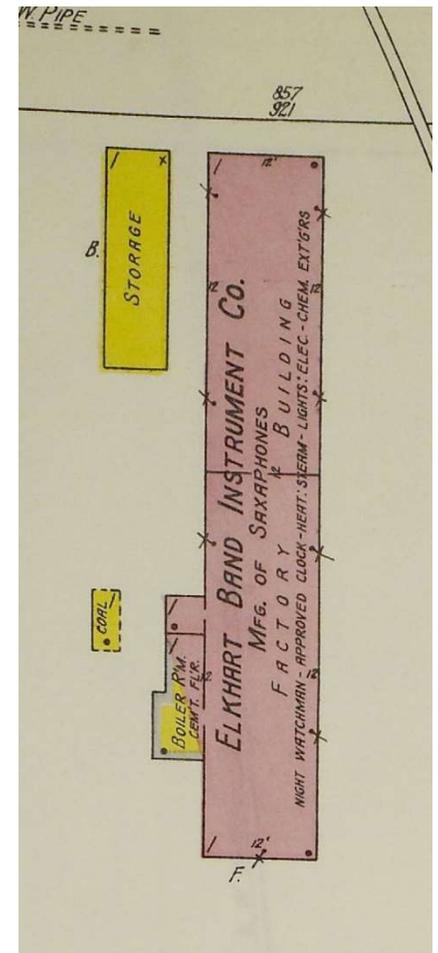
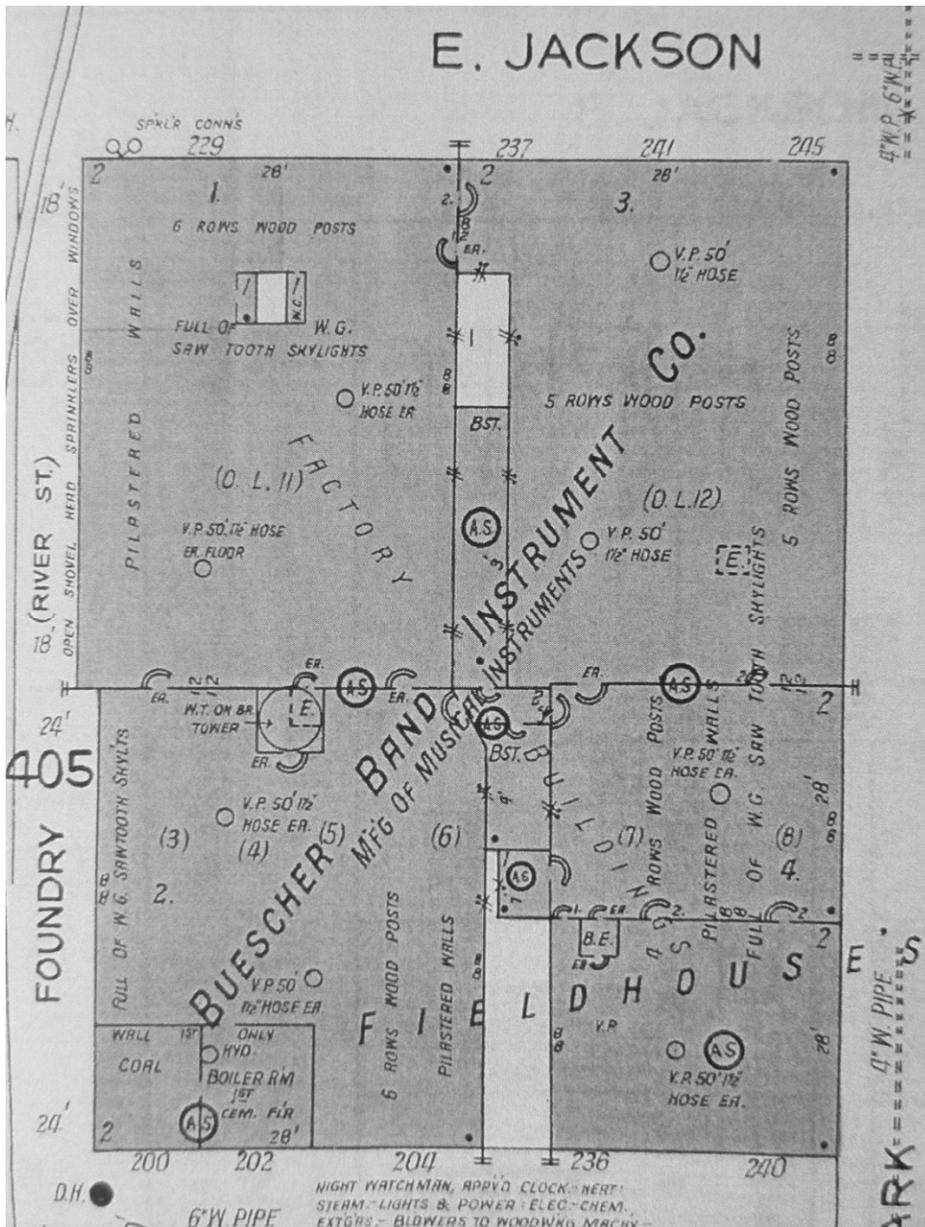


1919 They purchase land south of the factory in October and remove five existing homes for an addition to double production. By April 1920, this was nearly completed, and they had nearly 1,000 workers.

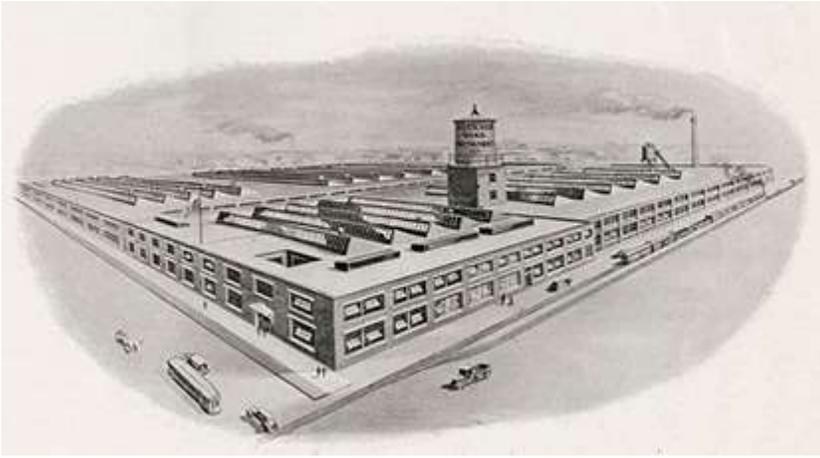
1923 A large addition was to be finished by November which caused the factory to take up the entire block. They were to increase the workers from 650 to 800.

The Elkhart Band Inst. Co. adds a Plum St. factory; #857 / 921 on the 1927 map at right. It is shown as a one-story brick building which could be the basis for the existing structure on the same site today. The building measured 40' x 240' which is the same width as the existing building. You can see a faint outline on the ground that this building used to be longer. (photos 2 & 3 at right)

1927 This map shows a much-enlarged factory now taking up the entire block. Expansions were from 1919 & 1923.



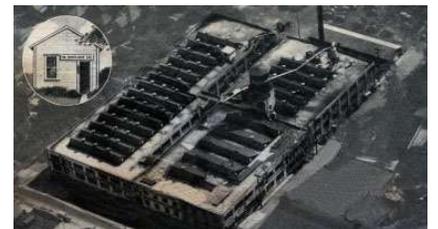
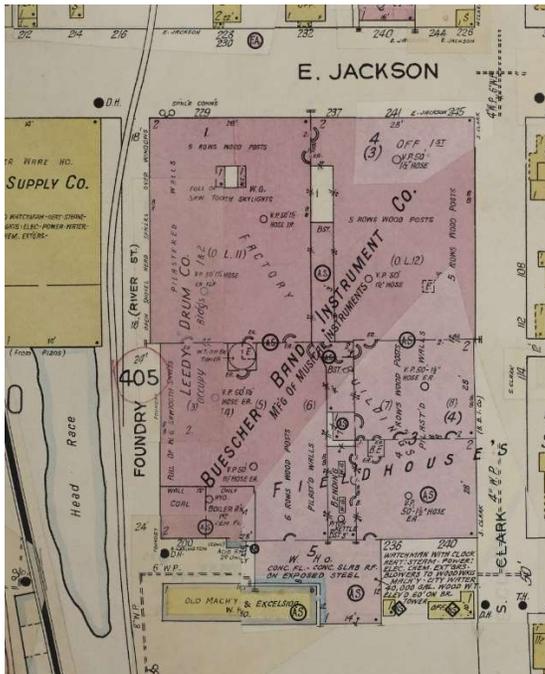
1928 catalog image (a bit stretched!)



1935 This catalog photo shows how much the original factory had been altered in 1923 with a unified appearance and larger windows.



1950 Sanborn map showing an addition on the south side.



1946

1963 The business is sold to Selmer which continued to use the plant until about 1983.



1936 photos at right



Buescher Trademarks

- 1894** Buescher Manufacturing Co logo with bell, triangle, and tuning fork was registered on 9/6/1898 with first use given as 10/7/1894 (photo 1).
- 1930** Buescher Band Instrument Co logo (below) registered on 1/7/1930 with first use given as 1894. The registration document also says “Act of February 20, 1905” which seems more likely when this was first used. This was renewed in 1948.



- 1967** Buescher logo with first use in 1967 and registered by the Selmer Co in 1982. It was cancelled in 2016 (#2 at right).
- 1999** Logo filed by Conn-Selmer in 1999 and registered in 2001 with first use given as 2/12/1999 (#3 at right).

*The Buescher Manufacturing Co was incorporated on February 12, 1894 with \$15,000 capital for making musical instruments and novelty goods. F. A. Buescher, Henry Lee Young, and John H. Collins were the directors (*Music Trade Review*). [Given the February incorporation date and the first use of the original logo in October, I have to assume that the first instruments were completed in October.]

