

# Matthew Arbuckle

## Glasgow, Scotland

- 1828 Matthew Arbuckle is born on March 21<sup>st</sup> to John and Elizabeth in Glasgow, Scotland (birth cert.)
- 1840s Arbuckle studies cornet in London with Herman Koenig (Trescott)
- 1853 he deserts the British army and moves to Canada (Trescott); he had served with the band of the 26<sup>th</sup> Cameronians in China & India (obituary) and served in the Crimean War (*The 24<sup>th</sup> Regiment*, 1907)
- 1854 Arbuckle moves to Troy, NY and works as a musician in the Troy Brass Band (Trescott & 1855 NY census)
- 1855 Arbuckle is in Troy working as a musician (census)
- 1856 Arbuckle probably meets and marries Elizabeth Bennett (b.1833 in Lyons, NY, west of Albany); at this time he may be using a British Bayley cornet (photo 2 of 1860s Richardson made Bayley cornet, Boston)
- 1857 Isaac Fiske hears him play in Troy and hires him to play in Fiske's Band which he was forming in Worcester, MA (Trescott); he is probably playing a Fiske cornet
- 1858 Daughter Lizzie Elizabeth is born in Worcester in March; Matthew listed as music teacher (birth record)
- 1860 the Arbuckles are in Lyon, NY in February when son George is born; they are back in Worcester in June (census); Patrick Gilmore hears Arbuckle play and hires him to play in Boston which is followed by a lawsuit by Fiske (Trescott)
- 1861 Gilmore and Arbuckle become the leaders of the 24<sup>th</sup> Regiment band of the Massachusetts volunteers starting in September (*The 24<sup>th</sup> Regiment, Mass. Volunteers*, 1907)
- 1862 son George dies in Boston in February (death cert); son John is born in NY (census); Arbuckle & Gilmore help the 24<sup>th</sup> band remove the wounded under fire at the battle of Tranter's Creek in June; Matthew is released in October; it was said of him,

“When Arbuckle placed the cornet to his lips and essayed “The Last Rose of Summer” or “Annie Laurie” there was nothing doing within the sound of his notes but listening.”  
(*The 24<sup>th</sup> Regiment*)



- 1866 Arbuckle's Complete Cornet Method is published in Boston by Oliver Ditson
- 1870 Arbuckle is living in Boston, musician (census)
- 1872 Arbuckle is playing a Fiske push rod rotary valve cornet which was patented in 1873 (photo 4 last page and photo 5 author's collection); he moves to New York after the 1872 Boston Jubilee (*The 24<sup>th</sup> Regiment*)
- 1875 Gilmore buys a cornet from Courtois and has it engraved as a presentation to Arbuckle (photos 1-3 and below from Robb Stewart collection; see RobbStewart.com for more history on this cornet)



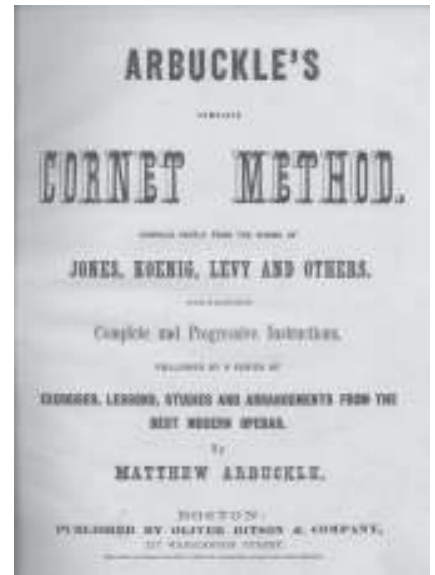
- 1878 Arbuckle is playing with the Emma Abbott Concert Company at the Academy of Music in Philadelphia (*The Philadelphia Enquirer*)
- 1879 Arbuckle is the singing leader and cornet soloist for the Brooklyn Tabernacle (*NY World*); he is described in another newspaper account as a teetotaler who never smiles
- 1880 Arbuckle is in New York City, #111 East 19<sup>th</sup> Street, son John is working as a store clerk (census), Matthew becomes the leader of the Ninth Regiment Band in September (*Music Trade Review*)
- 1881 Arbuckle & Colby Concert Company performs at Music Hall in Boston with daughter Lizzie, soprano (December *Music Trade Review*)
- 1883 Arbuckle dies of pneumonia in New York on May 23<sup>rd</sup>; his residence was at West 22<sup>nd</sup> Street (obit)



From the Philadelphia *Record*

“So Arbuckle is dead, and Levy has the field to himself. Matthew Arbuckle was the last man I should have suspected of having the seeds of consumption in him. He was the picture of toughness. Tall, broad and brawny, he looked as though it would take a bigger instrument than a cornet to kill him. But cornets have killed stronger men than Arbuckle. The constant strain on the lungs tells in the end. I never knew Arbuckle to express any jealousy of Levy, but Levy could not conceal his jealousy of Arbuckle. They were so very different in their style of playing that I shouldn't think there was any cause for rivalry, and certainly the world is large enough for two cornets. Arbuckle was twice the man that Levy is. He lived a decent, reputable life with his family and died sincerely mourned. I don't believe that there is a person in the world who cares a snap about Levy; but he plays the cornet beautifully, though he can no more play a ballad than Carlotta Patti can sing a hymn. It must be all runs and trills to show him to advantage; but Arbuckle could play “The Pretty Girl Milking Her Cow” or “Annie Laurie” in a way to bring tears to the eyes of a stoic.”

- 1883 “Hi Henry, of Gowanda [NY], the well-known minstrel manager, now owns the favorite cornet of the late Matthew Arbuckle, the famous cornetist.” (*Watkins Democrat*, July 11<sup>th</sup>)
- 1884 A number of friends of the late Matthew Arbuckle are acting in concert to erect a suitable monument over his grave. They include Patrick Gilmore, NY and Thomas Baldwin, Boston. (*Weymouth Gazette*)
- 1889 Lizzie E. Arbuckle is returning home after three years abroad studying music with a view to teaching vocals (*NY World*)
- 1889 Cornet #17171 is an Arbuckle model made by Courtois of Paris (photo 2); photos 3&4 and below show other Arbuckle models from the same period; these have a 0.459” bore





1891 Lizzie Arbuckle marries Walter M. Davis

1910 widow Elizabeth is living at #112 East 17<sup>th</sup> St, New York with daughter Lizzie; Walter is a manager for a piano factory (census)

1920 son John is living in Richmond, VA and working as a manager of a music house; he is retired by 1930 and dies before 1940 (census)

Mr. T. H. Rollinson wrote the following of Arbuckle:

"Probably no musician in Boston has ever been closer to the hearts of the people and his fellow musicians, than Matthew Arbuckle. All of the older musicians expressed great admiration for him, both as a great cornetist and a fine gentlemen. Arbuckle was a fine singer, a fact many thought contributed greatly to his fine rendition of songs and operatic arias, in which he excelled. Many people were moved to tears, after hearing him play a simple song. His performances were never of the skyrocket variety, with inartistic stunts displayed, to dazzle audiences. He was an artist in every sense of the word.

When he came to Boston, very little was known of triple tonguing, but Arbuckle set about to learn it, through the coaching of a Mr. Jacobus, who was then cornet soloist at the old Boston Museum, who also had a fine reputation as a teacher. Now as to triple tonguing in the old days, from about 1850 through the 1860s, it was believed to have been first introduced in Boston, by Mr. Koenig, who had come to this country some years before. Mr. D. W. Boardman is credited with having actually written the first triple tonguing Polka in America and had played it as early as 1850. It was the considered opinion of most early musicians of the time that Arbuckle and Wally Reeves and possibly Henry Brown were the first to really excel in the art.

Matthew Arbuckle was a man of imposing appearance, and he flourished a mustache and Imperial. He was always an accommodating person, and when he was engaged to play solos for a concert, after which there was a ball to follow, he would frequently stay to sit in with the orchestra, often playing 'til past midnight."