

W. T. ARMSTRONG

Division of Conn - Selmer

FLUTES AND PICCOLOS

Serial Number	Year Manufactured
18,000 -- 67,000	1949 -- 1965
Prefix A, B,C (omitting H, I, O, Q, W, Y and Z)	1965
Prefix R Series	1970
Prefix V Series	1972
Prefix 1, 2, 3	mid 1972
Prefix 3 thru 9	1973
Prefix 24 Series	1974

FLUTES

Plateau Models: 104, 104N, 100, 100B

French Models: 103, 103B, 303, 303B

PICCOLOS

Conical Bore Models - Plastic: 307, 308, 309

Cylindrical Bore Model - Metal: 204

CLARINETS

SAXOPHONES

Note: From 1987 on, the two-digit prefix number plus 50 will give you the year of manufacture on all

Armstrong products. In 1931 Armstrong's founder, Wm. Teasdale Armstrong opened his small instrument repair shop in Elkhart Indiana. In time, his reputation as a fine and discriminating craftsman spread throughout the Elkhart manufacturing community. It wasn't long before he was asked by professional flutists to fabricate complete flutes for their use. As demand for his services grew, he realized the need for adding-on key personnel. Being a long time resident of Elkhart, already thought as the "Instrument Manufacturing Capital of America", he had many other excellent craftspersons to choose from to accompany him in his enterprise. Some of his first key persons included flute quality-control expert Joseph Elias (later to become his lead tester), Sam Moore (seasoned builder, and the future father of another flute innovator, Jack Moore), his brother, Dinty Moore, also an experienced builder, and key business associates Marilyn Covey (Co. Secretary), and Jack Burket (Co. Accountant). Prior to starting this company, Bill Armstrong worked for Gus Buescher's saxophone manufacturing company, and the already famous C. G. Conn company. Later, the Armstrong enterprise was passed on to his son Edward, who had apprenticed under his father's guidance for many years. Edward's skills and commitment to excellence ushered the company to new heights and became one of the most respected flute companies in Elkhart. Under Edward's guidance, and commitment to intense research and development, Armstrong developed a complete line of flutes in the student (Armstrong), intermediate (Emeritus) and professional (Heritage) categories. Ed Armstrong worked closely with the professional flutists located in nearby Chicago, and tried to keep abreast with their needs and recommendations. Armstrong was responsible for many innovations in the flute-making industry, among them, the first curved student head joint, for example. The ubiquitous optional "gizmo" key (operating the low B) was in fact developed and named by Sam Moore. "Hey Sam, could you put one of those gizmo's on this flute for me?" Many contemporary flute luminaries were proponents of the Armstrong product line, including Jean Pierre Rampal, James Pellerite, Harry H. Moskovitz, and later Mark Thomas, who became Armstrong's professional liaison and artist-in-residence. (As a side note, back in the early 70's Mark's son Jeff worked on the bench directly across from me as a final finisher prior to leaving the company and developing his own flute line.) Other well-known ex-Armstrong flute makers include Tom Green, Tom Lacy, and of course the very well known Jack Moore. In the 50's and 60's the factory foreman of Armstrong was Emmy DeFord. Emmy left Armstrong in, as my memory serves me 1969, and began his own flute manufacturing company. Emmy was replaced by Al Singleton as plant foreman. In the early 70's Armstrong tooled-up to manufacture the Alex Murray flute. This project was led by Jack Moore, then head of the Heritage department. Two of us, myself and another Heritage technician, Dale Eurkey (sp?), final-finished (assembled, adjusted, play-tested) the 50 Murray flutes to be distributed to each of the "Big 10" universities for a Murray flute pilot project. Each of the schools were to receive 5 flutes, whereupon each of the resident heads of flute instruction were to teach the Murray Method. To the best of my recollection this project never actually came to fruition. Just prior to leaving Armstrong, I worked along with five other persons on the Armstrong Saxophone project developing their sax line led by Herb Couf. I left the company in 1974 to open my own repair/restoration facility (all instruments: woodwinds, brasswinds, strings) in nearby South Bend, Indiana. After leaving the company, I was hired by Armstrong to set-up the initial Armstrong clarinet production off site. Previously, a consortium of 10 individuals had invested \$10,000 (\$1000 each) in purchasing the complete C. G. Conn 16N and 17N clarinet tooling at the final Conn auction, just prior to moving to Nogales, AZ. My task was to make sense of the many boxes of parts - tools -equipment, and assemble it all into a functional production line. After about 6 months, I was able to produce 50 prototypes, before handing the complete operation back over to Armstrong. The company is currently a part of the United Musical Instruments, U.S.A. Inc. conglomerate and manufacturers a complete line of flutes, piccolos, saxophones, clarinets, oboes, bassoons, and woodwind accessories.

Please, if you note any discrepancies, or have additional information relating to this company, we would appreciate it VERY much if you would pass it on to us here at The MusicTrader. Thank you very much!

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