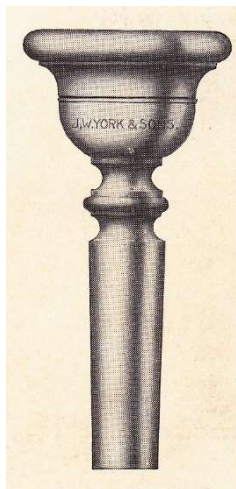


York, Grand Rapids Brass Instrument Mouthpieces c.1890-1952

YORK REGULAR MODEL MOUTHPIECES (c.1890-c.1933)



Just as no instruments have been found marked before the “York & Son” period (1887-1898), no mouthpieces so marked have been found prior to this date. The earliest York mouthpieces documented are the eight artist model cornet mouthpieces and the other band instrument mouthpieces in what was termed the “Regular Model” series, and was available until at least 1933⁴. Although limited at first to the cornet, between the “Regular”, “Equo” and “Al-tru” series certainly makes York one of the first widely available makers of customizable mouthpieces in the U.S. Their descriptions follow as presented in contemporary York literature:

“Cornet Mouthpieces

- No. 1 – Weldon Model. Large cup, round face, small rim, small bore.
- No. 2 – York Model. Medium and deep cup, rounding face with flat surface, medium rim, large bore.
- No. 3 – Courtois Model. Small cup, round face, medium rim, small bore.
- No. 4 – Crean Model. Medium and deep cup, flat face, wide rim, medium bore.
- No. 5 – Besson Model. Small cup, rounding flat face, wide rim, large bore.
- No. 6 – Levy Model. Medium deep cup, round face, small rim, medium bore.
- No. 7 – Boston Model. Medium cup, flat face with rounding edges, medium rim, medium bore.
- No. 8 – Emerson Model. Large, deep cup, flat face with rounding outer edge, wide rim, large bore.

Band Instrument Mouthpieces

- No. 11 – Band and Orchestra Horn
- No. 12 – Eb Alto
- No. 13 – Bb Tenor
- No. 14 – Baritone
- No. 15 – Bb Tenor Slide Trombone
- No. 16 – Bb Tenor Valve Trombone
- No. 17 – Bb Bass
- No. 19 – Eb Bass
- No. 20 – BBb Bass”^{1 8}

This seems to be the series that originated with the “York and Son” company (1887-1898).
Added later were:

No. 9 – York Eb Cornet Model
No. 10 – Bb and A Cornet
No. 18 – Monster Eb Bass
No. 21 – Bb Trumpet (Small)
No. 22 – Bb Trumpet (Large)
No. 23 – Bb Trumpet
No. 24 – Bb Trumpet
No. 25 – B and O Horn (Medium)
No. 25½ - B and O Horn (Large)
No. 29 – Concert Horn
No. 30 – Trombone Model (Large)
No. 31 – French Horn (Deep)
No. 32 – French Horn (Shallow)
No. 51 – Eb Bass”¹
No. 91 – Monster BBb Bass (Large)
No. 101 – French Horn
No. 105 – Trumpet
No. 0 – Bugle (Small Cup)
No. 00 – Bugle (Large Cup)
Unnumbered Alto Trombone^{3 4}

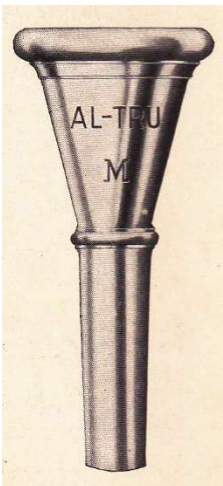
The Regular mouthpieces remained in the catalog until at least 1933.⁴

Also extant (and not in catalogs) have been found a “York and Sons”

No. 26 – Alto

No. 20½ - BBb Bass

YORK AL-TRU (MODEL) MOUTHPIECES (c.1916-c.1927)



“These mouthpieces are made in pairs, one having a small cup for playing on the street and on parades and the other has a deep cup for concert, orchestra playing and solos and while the cups of these mouthpieces are entirely different, they have identically the same rim and face. With their use the performer can readily change from one to the other without inconvenience and without noticing a particle of difference. Although these mouthpieces were introduced only a short time ago, today they are used by a very large number of Cornetists throughout the country.”¹

Although only described for cornets in the 1917 catalog, it seems that this line was expanded. They can be identified by the use of an instrument number with an “S”, “M” or “L”. These are the Al-tru Model Mouthpieces that have been found:

Al-tru S – Cornet
Al-tru M – Cornet
Al-tru 0 – Cornet
Al-tru 00 – Cornet
Al-tru M 0 – Cornet
Al-tru S 00 – Cornet
Al-tru 2S – Cornet
Al-tru 2M – Cornet
Al-tru 4S – Trumpet
Al-tru 4M – Trumpet
Al-tru 4L – Trumpet
Al-tru 5M – Alto
Al-tru 6M – Alto
Al-tru 9S – Horn
Al-tru 9L – Horn
Al-tru 10S – Trombone
Al-tru 10M – Trombone
Al-tru 15M – Bass
Al-tru 15L – Bass

By 1927 the only Al-tru mouthpieces mentioned in the price update for catalog 39 were for cornet mouthpieces 0 and 00.³

YORK COUTURIER MODEL CORNET MOUTHPIECES (1914-1916)



“Mr. Couturier uses this mouthpiece exclusively. He plays 6 complete octaves, which is the greatest range ever played on the cornet, and he attributes a large part of his success to his mouthpiece. As illustrated, the rim is concave so as to conform to the convex formation of the lip muscles, hereby promoting an even tension of these muscles, making it possible to play with but very little lip pressure.

Made in three sizes as follows:

Size A has a small cup, rim and bore.

Size B has a medium cup, medium rim and medium bore.

Size C is a large cup with a large cup and a heavy rim.”

[marked “DISCONTINUED” in c.1916 catalog] ¹

YORK EQUO MOUTHPIECES



“To provide a mouthpiece upon which performers who have either a protruding upper or lower lip may accomplish the best results with the minimum effort, the House of York has brought out its Equo Model. The use of one of these mouthpieces permits a restful position of the lips and enables the performer to get much better results.

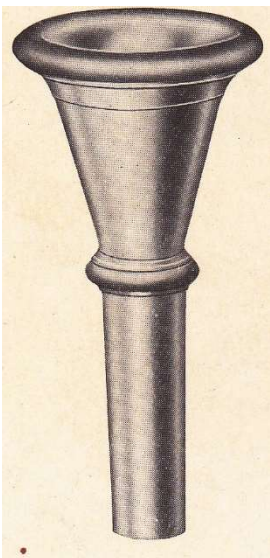
For Cornet

- No. 3 – Small cup, round face, medium rim, small bore,
- No. 5 – Small cup, rounding flat face, wide rim, large bore.
- No. 6 – Medium deep cup, round face, small rim, medium bore.
- No. 7 – Medium cup, flat face with rounding edges, medium rim, medium bore.

For Trombone”¹

The description of the Equo cornet mouthpiece cups and rims correspond exactly to the Regular cornet models 3, 5, 6 and 7, but without the corresponding model names. Since no options are given for trombone it must be assumed that there is only one mouthpiece available, based on the Regular mouthpiece No. 15 – Bb Tenor Slide Trombone.

YORK PRYOR MODEL TROMBONE MOUTHPIECES (c.1916-c.1934)



“The Pryor Model Mouthpiece, herewith illustrated, is not a new creation, but is a style that until recently has been only obtainable on special order. The demand has, however, become so great that we feel justified in manufacturing this as well as our other styles of mouthpieces, in large quantities, and also giving it a place in our regular catalog. More than this, while so doing we have reduced the price fully one-half from the previous made-to-order figure; a fact which will doubtless be fully appreciated by our customers. To those who are familiar with the great merit of this wonderful mouthpiece no recommendation is necessary, to others we will simply say that it is without question the Most Perfect Trombone Mouthpiece Ever Produced. With it the performer can do more hard work, without tiring the lips, than with any other model of trombone extant; and for

the production of correct tones in both the highest and lowest as well as the middle register of the instrument its[sic] equal is as yet undiscovered”¹

York later expanded the Pryor Model into 2 sizes of trombone mouthpiece:

No. 1 – Small

No. 2 – Large^{3 4}

They were no longer in the catalog or price list by 1935.

YORK AL-TRU (SERIES) MOUTHPIECES (c.1933-1940)



“It is false economy to try to get along without the very best in a mouthpiece - it is too important to the musician – whether he be amateur or professional. York has created a new line of mouthpieces, even better than our old favorites, to meet present day requirements – and they are being enthusiastically received.

The York Al-tru Mouthpieces are skillfully designed with a slightly rounding rim and face, so that they rest very comfortably on the embouchure. The cup is not too deep, nor too shallow; it is just right. Taper and throat are designed so the performer can obtain maximum results with comparative ease. The big feature, however, is the extra heavy cup, which provides the weight and solidity necessary to obtain tones of quality and sonorous values.

These mouthpieces are designed for York Instruments, and we should have the serial number in order to select the size that will fit your instrument. If your instrument is not a York, it will be necessary for you to send a mouthpiece that fits your instrument so that a new mouthpiece of the proper size may be selected.”¹

Al-tru Style mouthpieces seem to restart the entire York range beginning at number 40, sometime near 1933 (when both the Regular Style and Al-tru Style appear).² They do not bear the “S”, “M” or “L” that the earlier Al-tru Model mouthpieces did, although they do re-use the “Al-tru” name.

Al-tru Style mouthpieces included:

- No. 40 – Cornet⁴
- No. 40 – Cornet (Deep Cup)^{5 6 7}
- No. 41 – Cornet (Shallow Cup)^{4 5 6 7}
- No. 42 – Cornet (Small Bore)⁴
- No. 42 – Cornet (Medium Cup)^{5 6 7}
- No. 43 – Flugel Horn (or Deep Cup Cornet)^{4 5 6 7}
- No. 44 – Trumpet (Small Bore)⁴
- No. 44 – Trumpet (Medium Cup)^{5 6 7}
- No. 45 – Trumpet (Shallow Cup)^{4 5 6 7}
- No. 46 – Trumpet (Large Bore)^{4 5 6 7}
- No. 47 – Trumpet (Shallow cup-Custom Rim)^{5 6 7}
- No. 47½ - Cornet (Shallow Cup-Cushion Rim)⁷
- No. 48 – Trombone (Small Bore)^{4 5 6 7}
- No. 49 – Trombone (Shallow Cup)^{4 5}
- No. 50 – Trombone (Medium Bore)^{5 6 7}
- No. 52 – Trombone (Large Bore)^{4 5 6 7}
- No. 54 – B & O Horn⁴
- No. 54 – Mellophone^{5 6 7}
- No. 56 – Concert Horn^{4 5 6 7}
- No. 58 – French Horn (Small Bore)^{4 5 6 7}
- No. 59 – French Horn (Medium)^{5 6 7}
- No. 60 – French Horn (Large Bore)^{4 5 6 7}
- No. 62 – Alto^{4 5 6 7}
- No. 64 – Tenor^{4 5 6 7}
- No. 66 – Baritone^{4 5 6 7}
- No. 66½ - Baritone (Shallow Cup)^{5 6 7}
- No. 68 – Eb Bass (Small)^{4 5 6 7}
- No. 70 – Eb Bass, Monster (Large)^{4 5 6 7}
- No. 72 – BBb Bass (Small)^{4 5 6 7}
- No. 74 – BBb Bass (Medium)^{4 5 6 7}
- No. 76 – BBb Bass (Large)^{4 5 6 7}

Also extant (and not so far in catalogs) have been found a Al-tru

- No. 26½ - Cornet
- No. 91 – French Horn
- No. 98 – French Horn

YORK STREAMLINED AND U.S. SUPERIOR MOUTHPIECES (c.1952-?)



York Streamlined Mouthpieces

“As fine a mouthpiece as can be made. Ultra-modern with exceptional blowing qualities. Furnished in small, medium and large bore.”⁹

It seems as though when production was resumed after the war with Carl Fischer Musical Instruments at the helm the numbering for the Al-tru (model) mouthpieces was reused, although bore sizing replaced cup sizing. A way to differentiate this series is that these mouthpieces do not bear the stamp “AL-TRU”, but are only marked “York”, the instrument number, and “S”, “M” or “L”.

- No. 2 – Cornet
- No. 4 – Trumpet
- No. 5 – Mellophone
- No. 6 – Alto Horn
- No. 9 – French Horn
- No. 10 – Trombone
- No. 11 – Baritone
- No. 12 – Eb Recording Bass
- No. 13 – BBb Recording Bass
- No. 14 – BBb Sousaphone
- No. 15 – Eb Sousaphone

U.S.A. Superior Mouthpieces

“A most reasonably priced mouthpiece. Accurately made with perfect bore and cup. Medium or large models”⁹

It is not immediately obvious where this numbering system originated other than adding 50 to the Streamlined Mouthpieces.

No. 52 – Cornet

No. 54 – Trumpet

No. 60 – Trombone

No. 61 – Baritone

No. 71 – Eb Sousaphone

No. 73 – BBb Sousaphone

No. 75 – Soprano Bugle

No. 77 – Tenor Bugle

No. 79 – Baritone Bugle

¹ (c.1916) York Band Instruments Catalog No. 34 p.30 *Author's collection*

² 1917 York Band Instruments Price Update Effective 7/10/1917 *The York Loyalist*

³ Retail Price List 39-d Effective November 1, 1927 *Author's collection*

⁴ Retail Price List 41-c Effective May 1, 1933 *Author's collection*

⁵ 1935 York Band Instruments & Saxophone Catalogs #42 p.16 *Author's collection*

⁶ 1936 York's Sales Staff, Volume 14 No. 1 p.7 *The York Loyalist*

⁷ 1938 York Band Instruments Catalog p.17 *The York Loyalist*

⁸ 1908 York Band Instruments Catalog p.27 *The York Loyalist*

⁹ 1952 York Band Instrument Catalog p.8 *The York Loyalist*