

Bethinking of Old Orleans

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No. 10

WILLIAM CARTER'S NASALETTE

(No Model.)

W. CARTER.
MUSICAL INSTRUMENT.

No. 477,167.

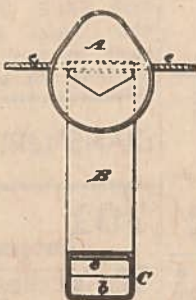
Patented June 14, 1892.



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



WITNESSES
Geo. B. Church
W. Crawford Ramsdale

INVENTOR
W. Carter
BY
Mason B.
ATTORNEYS

Information in this story was forwarded to me by Albion Historian Edith Anderson from Mr. Everett D. Bryan of Dover, Delaware. The accompanying illustration shows the patent drawings for a musical instrument invented by William Carter of Albion, N.Y. one hundred years ago.

The instrument, which Carter called a Nasalette, is more commonly referred to today as a nose flute. He filed a patent application for the Nasalette Nov. 19, 1891 with Geo. B. Church and W. Crawford Ramsdale, both Albion attorneys as witnesses. On June 14, 1892 Patent No. 477,167 was issued to William Carter by the United States Patent Office. The patent in part, is as follows:

"Figure 1 represents a side view of the instrument as in use on the nose and in the mouth of the performer. Fig. 2 is a vertical section of the instrument on a larger scale, and Fig. 3 is a rear vertical view thereof.

"The instrument may be made of tin, brass, copper, rubber, celluloid, or any other suitable material or materials.

"In operation when it is in place upon the face of the person, as shown in Fig. 1, the air blown through the nose into the hood A is passed down and deflected by the duct B into the forward end of the mouth piece or tube C and caused to strike the sounding strip b or its specified equivalent -- a reed -- and by the vibration of the sounding strip or device a musical sound is produced that can be regulated, varied, or modulated to express any desired tone or tones by means of the mouth and working or changing the position of the tongue over or at the back of the mouth-tube C, as in whistling. Wire loops d, having rubber attachments e, are represented as applied on or to opposite sides of the instrument for the purpose of holding it in place, the loops going over the ears of the performer. By means of those wire loops and rubber attachments the performer will have his hands left free to use or play any other instrument at the same time; but these attachments may, if desired, be dispensed with.

"The instrument requires little or no practice to play upon, and almost anyone who can whistle with the lips can play upon it."

William Carter indicates a variety of materials from which it may be made, the first of which is tin. In doing some research, I found that in the 1887-88 Orleans County Directory William Carter is listed as a tinsmith.

Mr. Bryan writes: "I have an early example of this instrument, made of metal (those of today are of plastic) with Carter's patent number on it. Later models, such as mine, did not have the earpieces, and the part around the mouth was broadened....but the modern version goes back to Carter's patent. The present name popular for these is nose flute. Note Carter's suggested name, nasalette, since the air stream is supplied by the nose and not by the mouth. Stamped on the modern plastic version is the name the maker has decided to use, Humanatone. If you or someone wants to buy some of these, ask for the Humanatone.

"I play a few conventional instruments, and have had a lot of fun with this one. No one takes it seriously, and it usually gets a laugh. One thing I do is to hold a Nasalette (I prefer that name since the inventor did) in place with a rubber band while accompanying myself on the guitar."