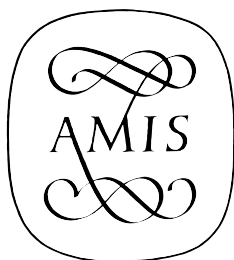


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# A Unique Over-the-Shoulder Bugle with Keys and Valves and Its Owner, James Rice, Teacher of Brass Bands

GEORGE FOREMAN AND ROBB STEWART

When Richard Willis arrived in America from Ireland in 1816, he brought his Kent Bugle with him and became America's first professional keyed bugle soloist. Within a year, he was leader of the band of the Military Academy at West Point and had added two keyed bugles to that band.<sup>1</sup> Other groups, such as the Boston Brigade Band, followed suit and by the 1830s, keyed bugles and ophicleides, the bass voice of the keyed brass family, were common in mixed wind bands. The Boston Brass Band, led by keyed bugle virtuoso Edward "Ned" Kendall and generally recognized as the first band in the United States composed entirely of brass instruments, gave its initial performance in May 1835 (fig. 1). Although the keyed bugle continued to be the primary soprano voice in the brass family through the early 1850s, the development of various types of valve systems further stimulated interest in brass instruments. By the mid-1840s, most American bands, particularly those outside of the cities, had adopted all-brass instrumentations.

As the demand grew, experimentation and innovation in design marked the quest by American makers to produce ever-better instruments. In *Dodworth's Brass Band School*, published in 1853, Allen Dodworth detailed the criteria for a suitable instrument:

1st. That it blows easily.

2nd. That it is well in tune in the open notes.

3rd. That the valves are in proper proportion.

4th. That the defects are in such a part of the instrument as will be of the least injury to the part intended to be played by it, as one may be very good for a first, and another better for a second.<sup>2</sup>

1. Ralph T. Dudgeon, *The Keyed Bugle*, second ed. (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2004), 57–58.

2. Allen Dodworth, *Dodworth's Brass Band School* (New York: H. B. Dodworth, 1853), 12.

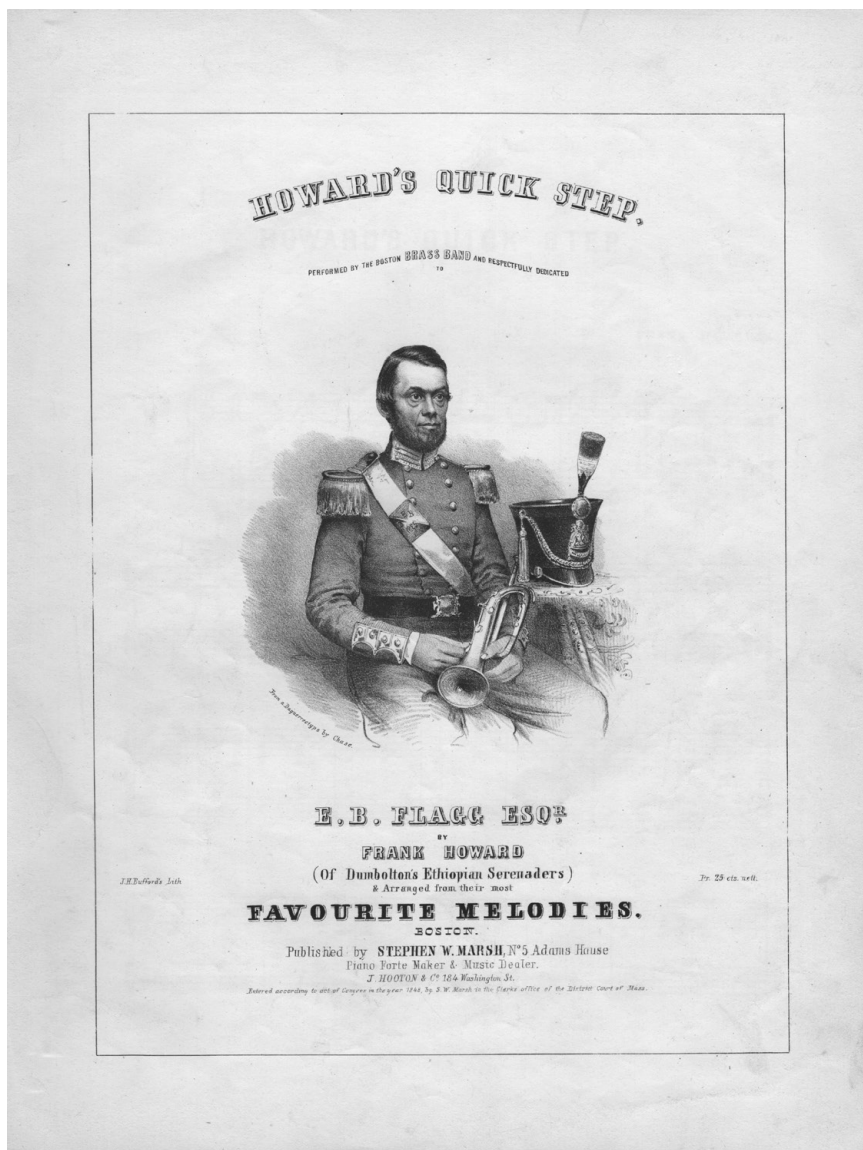


FIGURE 1. The keyed bugle continued to be the soprano voice of the brass family until the early 1850s. Eben Flagg, who succeeded Ned Kendall as leader of the Boston Brass Band in 1840, appears with his bugle on the cover of *Howard's Quick Step*, published in 1848. Foreman Collection.

Various valve configurations emerged. Some, such as the double piston valve system of the E-flat soprano saxhorn held by Alonzo Bond on the cover of *The Saxonia Quick Step* (1849) (fig. 2), were short-lived and disappeared. The nine-month American tour in 1849 of the Distin Family—John Distin and his three sons, who had introduced the family of instruments named for Adolphe Sax, one of its developers, to British audiences—influenced the evolving use of the three-piston valve system that grew to be prevalent. The saxhorn name became popular and spread rapidly, but at some point in the 1850s it began to go out of fashion, and eventually “cornet” came into general use. When *Dodworth’s Brass Band School* appeared, a bewildering array of instruments was still available. The section devoted to fingering charts lists no fewer than three dozen different instruments, including post horns, ebor cornos, klavicorns, neo cors, trombacellos, bombardones, and Dodworth’s improved cornet, with five valves.<sup>3</sup>

### ***Instruments with Both Keys and Valves***

For a brief time during the early 1850s, American makers explored various possibilities for designing instruments with both keys and valves.<sup>4</sup> Particularly noteworthy is the type of over-the-shoulder cornet—or bugle—described by Dodworth: “*Soprano Cornets* have lately been made in this country, combining the advantages of both valves and keys; they have three valves, like the ordinary Cornet, with the addition of five keys for the upper notes.”<sup>5</sup> The illustration on the cover of *Shelton’s Quick Step* depicts James Shelton, a New York bandmaster, holding such an instrument (fig. 3). Two known examples have survived, one in the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, MI, and the other in the Utley Collection at the National Music Museum in Vermillion, SD (fig. 4). E. G. Wright of Boston made both instruments, ca. 1852, and they have an almost identical arrangement of three rotary valves and five keys in the approximate positions

3. *Dodworth’s Brass Band School*, 18–22.

4. See Robert E. Eliason, “Brasses with Both Keys and Valves,” *Journal of the American Musical Instrument Society* 2 (1976): 69–85, and Sabine Katharina Klaus, *Trumpets and other High Brass: A History Inspired by the Joe R. and Joella F. Utley Collection* (Vermillion, SD: National Music Museum, 2017), III, “Valves Evolve,” 279–91.

5. *Dodworth’s Brass Band School*, 16.

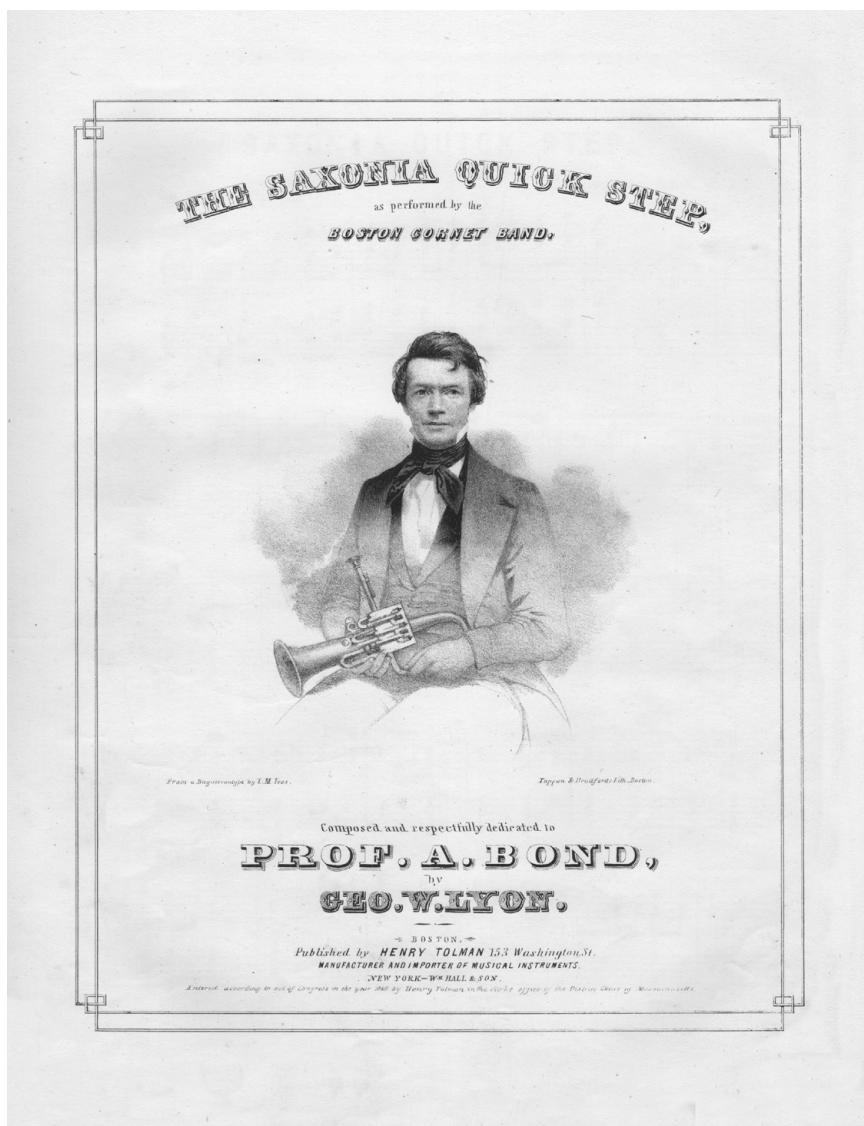


FIGURE 2a. Alonzo Bond, leader of the Boston Cornet Band, on the cover of *The Saxonia Quick Step* (1849) with his E-flat soprano saxhorn with double piston valves. Foreman Collection.



FIGURE 2b. Detail.

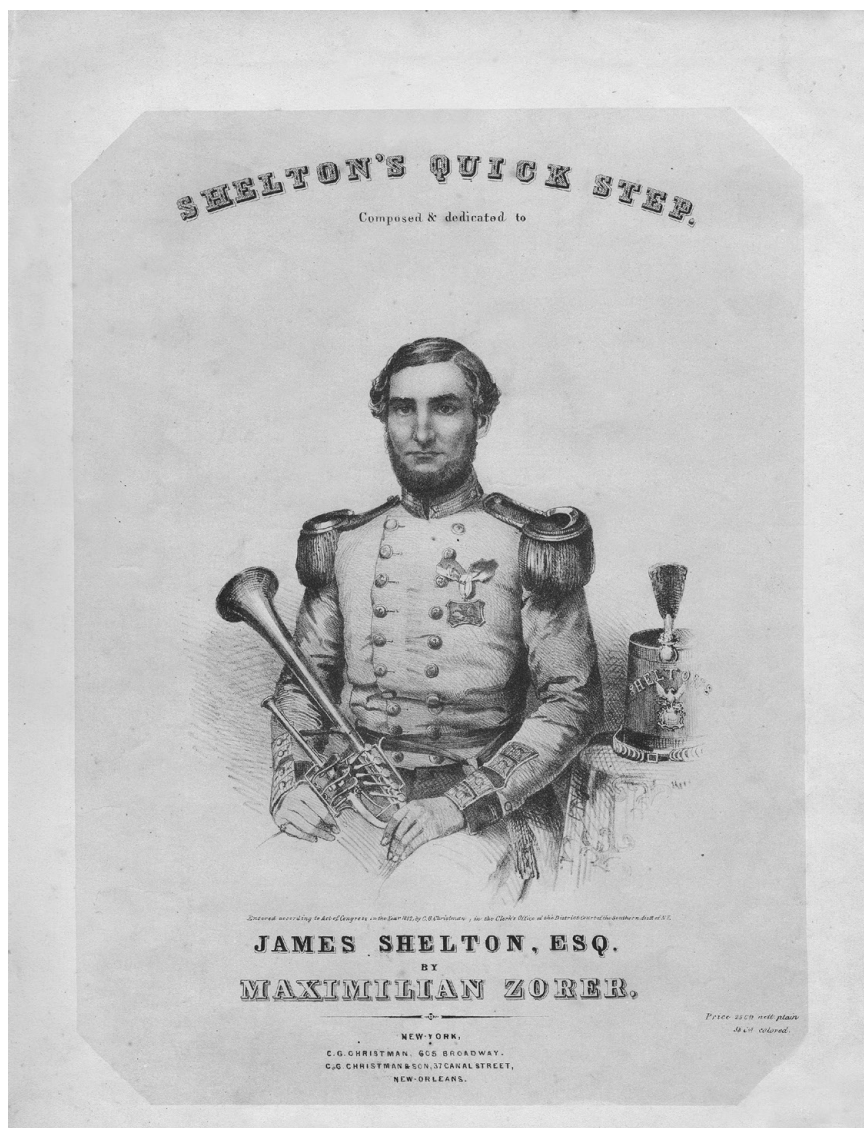


FIGURE 3a. The cover of *Shelton's Quick Step* (1852) depicts James Shelton, a New York bandmaster, holding an over-the-shoulder bugle with keys and valves similar to those made by E. G. Wright. Foreman Collection.



FIGURE 3b. Detail.





FIGURE 4. E. G. Wright over-the-shoulder bugle with three rotary valves and five keys, ca. 1852. National Music Museum, The University of South Dakota. Mark Olencki, Photographer.

of keys eight through twelve on a twelve-key bugle. Based on their measurements, both Eliason and Klaus concluded that they should be classified as bugles rather than cornets. This suggests—contrary to Dodworth’s description of them as cornets—that they evolved conceptually as keyed bugles with valves added rather than as cornets with keys added.

### ***An Instrument with Valves and Keys in a Different Configuration***

In 2018, a daguerreotype of an unidentified man holding a remarkable, possibly unique, over-the-shoulder bugle with a previously unrecorded configuration of keys and valves appeared in an auction of militaria (fig. 5).<sup>6</sup> Close examination of the image of the instrument reveals promising

6. Mark Jones of Hamburg, NY, purchased the daguerreotype in the auction. Subsequently, it became part of the Foreman Collection.

clues, but not sufficient information to determine conclusively the maker or exactly when it was made. Almost certainly, however, one of the five major early New England makers—Thomas Paine, Graves & Company, E. G. Wright, Allen Manufacturing Co., or Isaac Fiske—made the instrument in the photograph. All produced both soprano keyed bugles and then rotary valve sopranos.

The instrument in the daguerreotype clearly has both keys and valves and is pitched in E-flat soprano (fig. 6). Of saxhorn or bugle proportions, it appears to have three rotary valves and at least seven keys. Presumably, it could be played with either the valves only or as a keyed bugle, although with unique fingerings for the keys. Likely, as with other known instruments with both valves and keys, the player primarily employed the valves with the keys available to augment both facility and intonation. The instrument is not known to have survived, and without having it in hand or building a series of reproductions, it is not possible to judge the utility of this concept.

### ***The Maker?***

The available evidence suggests that the likely maker of the present instrument was either E. G. Wright or Isaac Fiske. None of the instruments discussed above has a removeable tuning mouthpipe as seen here, but those by Wright and Fiske have similar braces between the mouthpipe and bell. Instruments made by Wright during the early 1850s also have braces similar in design to that shown from the third slide to bell tube, but none of the known E-flat sopranos by Wright have the third slide tubes parallel to the mouthpipe and bell. That is, however, the design of all the known three-valve sopranos with bells over the shoulder made by Isaac Fiske.

### ***The Owner***

Although the definite identity of the maker remains unsettled, that of the owner of the instrument became clear when an envelope imprinted with advertising for “James Rice, Teacher of Brass Bands” surfaced about



FIGURE 5. Daguerreotype of James Rice (not identified) with an over-the-shoulder bugle with both keys and valves. Foreman Collection.



FIGURE 6. Detail of instrument from the James Rice daguerreotype.

two years after the daguerreotype.<sup>7</sup> The engraving of Rice and his instrument on the reverse side of the envelope clearly reflects the content of the daguerreotype (fig. 7, fig. 8).

The same engraving appeared in a four-page illustrated promotional flier in the collection of the Vermont Historical Society that Rice published shortly after the band convention he organized in May 1855 in Plattsburgh, NY. (See fig. 13.) The date of this brochure confirms that Rice's instrument dates from the first half of the decade and probably around the same time as those made by Wright.

James Rice was a widely known Vermont band leader, teacher, and cornetist during the 1850s, but he faded into obscurity as a professional musician after a relatively short career of less than ten years. He was born in Hartford, VT, on December 29, 1830, the son of a farmer, and in later years Rice recalled that he had grown up in a "poor" family with no advantages during his childhood.<sup>8</sup> After beginning his education in the Hartland public schools, he studied at Norwich University, the Vermont military college, from 1844 until 1847.<sup>9</sup> Subsequently, he learned the trade and worked for several years as a machinist, at first in Chicopee, MA, and later possibly in Worcester, MA, where the 1852 city directory includes a machinist named James Rice. His known musical career began in 1854 when the band in Windsor, VT, engaged him to be its leader and instructor. He continued to work with bands in various Vermont locations until the Civil War started, and he organized and led the band of the Fifth Vermont Volunteer Infantry Regiment. After all volunteer regimental bands were discharged in 1862, he re-enlisted and served as a captain in the Vermont Eleventh Infantry Regiment, which became the First Heavy Artillery Regiment, until 1865. After the war, Rice made his home in Pueblo, CO, where he was a successful merchant, and in 1873, Pueblo citizens elected him the town's first mayor. At the state level, he was a member of the board of regents of the University of Colorado for six years, and in 1886 he won the first of his two terms as secretary of state. In later years, he pursued mining interests. He died on February 28, 1910.

7. The envelope is in the Foreman Collection.

8. The only known account of Rice's early life is included in the Colorado section of *The Encyclopedia of The New West* (Marshall, TX: The United States Biographical Publishing Company, 1881), 61. His later life is well documented by census, military, and other public records, as well as city directories and abundant contemporary newspaper articles.

9. *Norwich University 1819-1911: Her History, Her Graduates, Her Roll of Honor* (Montpelier, VT: The Capital City Press, 1911), III, 641.

### ***Professional Band Musicians in the 1850s***

During the 1850s, summer—with its park concerts, parades, fairs, excursions, militia encampments, firemen's musters, resort hotels, and the Fourth of July—was the “band season” for professional and amateur band musicians alike. During the frigid months, the professionals sought other opportunities. Some found indoor work in theatre orchestras or with those of touring dramatic and variety companies. Others, including well-known figures such as the brothers Rhodolph and D. C. Hall, and Ned Kendall, played in the bands of circuses with routes through the warmer climates of the South. Winter was also “dance season,” and quadrille bands of five or six instruments provided a dependable income for professional musicians, many of whom set aside their brass instruments and doubled on string or woodwind instruments in those groups. During January 1855, the *Boston Herald* carried regular ads for fifteen or more different quadrille bands. For amateur bands, on the other hand, performance opportunities were limited during the winter, but for those with the means to hire a “professor” such as James Rice, it was “teaching season.”

A closer examination of the musical career of James Rice reveals a noteworthy—but previously overlooked—band leader, cornetist, and prolific instructor of brass bands. Further, his connections as a representative of instrument makers and prominent composers of band music provide fresh evidence as to how the commerce of the band “business” functioned during the 1850s.

### ***Windsor, 1854***

Little is known about Rice's musical training and early experience. The town of Hartford, where he lived as a boy, had a band during the mid-1840s that played semi-weekly concerts during the summer, and he might have gained some experience in it, but that is speculation.<sup>10</sup> He was possibly a member of the Norwich Cadet Band, which made several appearances during Rice's time as a Norwich student.<sup>11</sup> In any event, in the spring of 1854, Rice surfaced in Windsor, VT, as the leader of the Windsor Cornet Band.

10. *The Hartford (VT) Herald*, copied in the *Windsor Vermont Chronicle*, June 25, 1845, 3.

11. No roster of the members of the Norwich Cadet Band appears to have survived.



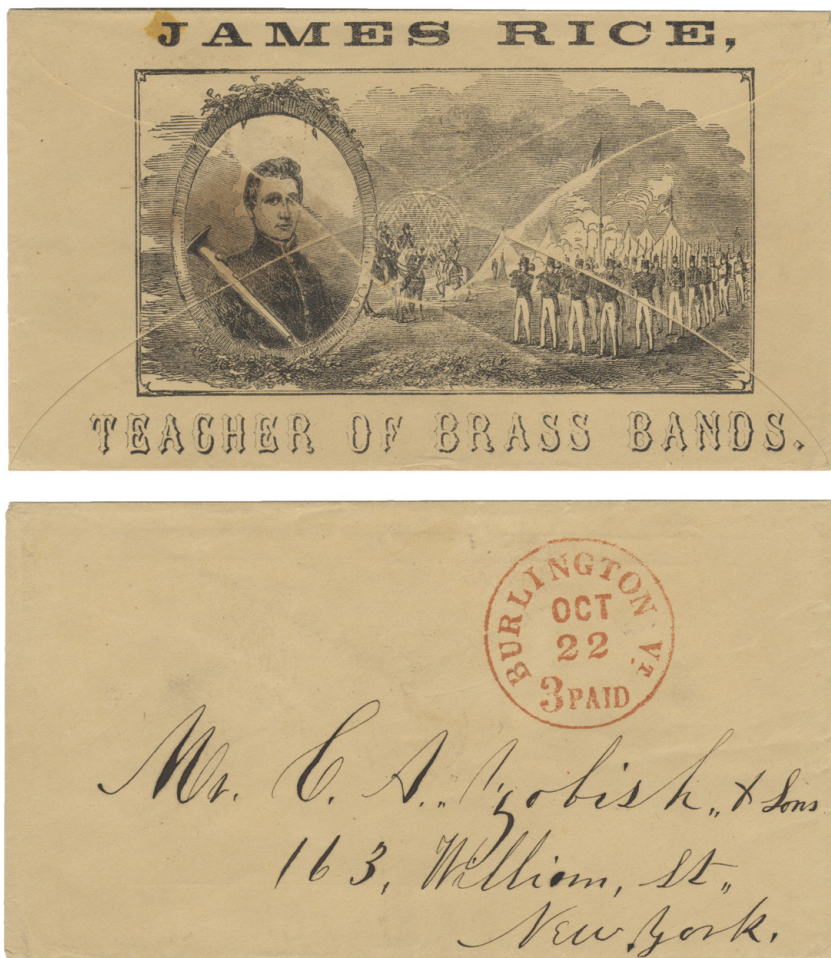


FIGURE 7. Envelope with advertising for James Rice “Teacher of Brass Bands” on the back. Mailed to C. A. Zebisch & Sons of New York, ca. 1853. Foreman Collection.



FIGURE 8. James Rice with over-the-shoulder bugle. Details from daguerreotype and envelope.

**A CARD.**

**THE WINDSOR CORNET BAND,**

**R**ESPECTFULLY announce to the public, that they are prepared to furnish Music for Military and Fireman's Parades, Pick-Nics, Excursions, &c. The Band having the past winter spared no pains in fitting themselves for the different calls above named, solicit a share of the public patronage.—Terms Liberal.

Applications may be made to **JAMES RICE**, Leader and Director. [45tf] **N. W. PATRICK**, Clerk.

**MR. RICE** is prepared to give Instruction on all kinds of **BRASS INSTRUMENTS**. He will also give lessons to **CLASSES** and **BRASS BANDS**, and will supply all persons, on application, with Music from the best composers.

57tf-\*6w

FIGURE 9. Newspaper ad for the Windsor Cornet Band and James Rice. *Windsor Vermont Journal*, May 19, 1854.



The Windsor Cornet Band was established in late 1852, initially under the instruction of Alonzo Bond, the prominent band leader and teacher from Boston, who for several months made weekly trips by rail to Windsor. After the fifteen-piece band played its first concert on January 14, 1853, the *Vermont Journal* reported that the “intelligent audience appeared extremely well pleased” and the band’s “progress has been greatly to the credit of both teacher and pupils.”<sup>12</sup> Bond was acquainted with Rice, and when the band sought a permanent leader in late 1853, he may have recommended Rice.

After several weeks with Rice, the band placed a notice in the *Vermont Journal* (fig. 9) that it was “prepared to furnish Music for Military and Fireman’s Parades, Pick-Nics, Excursions, &c.” The band’s ads, which continued until November, also stressed that “Mr. Rice is prepared to give Instruction on all kinds of BRASS INSTRUMENTS. He will also give lessons to CLASSES and BRASS BANDS, and will supply all persons, on application, with Music from the best composers.”<sup>13</sup>

The mention that Rice could supply bands with “music from the best composers” was significant. With printed band music still not widely available, Rice was probably dealing in hand copied music. Band historians have long speculated on how individual bands secured manuscript arrangements. A note printed on the sheet music cover of *The Ocean Wave Quick Step* (1843) that identifies the composer as “Allen Dodworth, of whom the Original parts for a Full Band can be procured” confirms that direct purchase from certain composers was an option. Various researchers have also maintained that multiple bands circulated manuscripts and sent them on to another band after copying the individual parts into their own books. Another theory is that some sort of manuscript “lead sheet” enabled band leaders to construct individual parts to meet the specific needs of their band. Rice’s statement that he could procure music for band, suggests still another possibility. Perhaps he had some sort of agreement to act as an agent for several composers, a distribution model that apparently has not previously been considered.

One of the Windsor Cornet Band’s first concerts under Rice was in nearby Claremont, NH, on May 6, 1854 (fig. 10). The program included two arrangements and a cornet solo by Rice as well as pieces by four of

12. *Windsor Vermont Journal*, January 21, 1853, 2.

13. *Windsor Vermont Journal*, May 19, 1854, 3.

the most prominent band figures of the day . . . Alonzo Bond and D. C. Hall, both of Boston, and from New York, Allen Dodworth and Claudio Grafulla.<sup>14</sup> A review of the concert found it to have been “every way very creditable to the Band.” Equally important, the article also revealed that Rice had organized in Claremont “a school of twelve scholars . . . and the design is, we are happy to know, to form a Band.” It continued, “Should this project receive, as we believe it will, the encouragement of our citizens, we may hope to see a Band here in a few short weeks, that will be a source of just pride. Mr. Rice has the name of being an excellent teacher and takes great interest in his school here.”<sup>15</sup>

A week after the Claremont concert, the band made an overnight trip to Bellows Falls, VT, where it played on Monday, May 15, for the summer opening of the Island House, one of the state’s most fashionable resort hotels. The next day, before returning home, the musicians appeared, unannounced, in Brattleboro, VT. “Their visit was entirely unexpected, the first notice of their coming being blown through their own instruments and heralded by the big drum,” reported the *Brattleboro Eagle*. The band gathered followers as it marched up Main Street to the Asylum for the Insane, where it gave an enthusiastically received concert. Later, impromptu performances in various locations throughout the town preceded a lavish dinner hastily organized by the Revere House hotel before the band departed for Windsor on the 5 p.m. train. “Many regrets were expressed that circumstances prevented the Band from remaining overnight. . . . The Band though comparatively young in their organization, do great credit to the capabilities and instructions of their leader, Mr. James Rice.”<sup>16</sup>

After the trip to Bellows Falls and Brattleboro, the *Vermont Journal* noted, “The Windsor Cornet Band are winning golden opinions from every quarter” and urged the citizens of the town to support the band’s outdoor summer concerts.<sup>17</sup> The band’s reputation continued to spread beyond Windsor. It played for a large Masonic gathering in Claremont.<sup>18</sup> Wells River, VT, engaged the band to provide the music for its Fourth of

14. *Claremont National Eagle*, May 4, 1854, 3.

15. *Claremont National Eagle*, May 11, 1854, 2.

16. *Brattleboro Eagle*, May 19, 1854, 2.

17. *Windsor Vermont Journal*, May 19, 1854, 3.

18. *Claremont National Eagle*, June 29, 1854, 2.

## ***Instrumental Concert.***

### **THE WINDSOR CORNET BAND**

**R**ESPECTFULLY announce to the citizens of this town and vicinity, that they will give an entertainment of Instrumental Music, at the

**Town Hall, on Saturday Evening, May 6.**

### **PROGRAMME.**

#### **PART I.**

1. Grand Opening Opera—Arranged for the occasion by J. Rice.
2. Quick-Step—Love Not, C. S. Grafala.
3. Medley Quick-Step—Be kind to thy loved ones at Home. C. S. Grafala.
4. Cornet Solo—Sweet Home, with Variations. J. Rice.
5. Quick-Step. Coats.
6. Andante—Home again, and Hornpipe, D. C. Hall.

**Intermission of 15 minutes.**

#### **PART II.**

1. Wood-Up Quick-Step. J. Holloway.
2. Medley Quick-Step—Wait for the Wagon, D. C. Hall.
3. Glendon Polka, A. Dodworth.
4. Andante—Irish Emigrant's Lament, J. Rice.
5. Andante—Lilly Dale, and Allegro, G. F. Robbins.
6. Quick Step, A. Bond.

**Doors open at 6 1-2 o'clock—Concert to commence at 7 1-2.**

**Tickets 12 1-2 cents—Children half price, to be had at the door.**

FIGURE 10. Program for the concert by the Windsor Cornet Band in Claremont, NH, on May 6, 1854. *Claremont National Eagle*, May 4, 1854.

July celebration.<sup>19</sup> When the organizers of a community picnic planned for the Fourth in Windsor discovered that the band would be out of town, they rescheduled the local festivities for a day later, the Fifth, to secure the band's participation.<sup>20</sup>

Rice introduced his *Windsor House Polka* at the July Fifth event (fig. 11). Dedicated to J. H. Simonds, owner of the Windsor House hotel, the polka was Rice's only known published piece. The illustrated lithograph sheet music cover includes the hotel and the notation, "As Performed by the Windsor Cornett [*sic*] Band. July 5th 1854."<sup>21</sup> The Windsor House building, now a community center, still stands in Windsor.

Paying a professional leader was a constant challenge for most town bands such as the Windsor Cornet Band. Benefit concerts from which the director received all or a significant portion of the proceeds were common, and the Windsor band organized two concerts to help support Rice. In announcing the first one, to be at the Windsor Court House on Friday, June 16, the *Vermont Chronicle* predicted that if the townspeople "remember that the Band have expended much time and money in the cultivation of an art that contributes so much to the sum of our common pleasures, that the tickets are only twelve and a half cents, and that it is a Benefit Concert for Mr. Rice, the leader and instructor, our citizens will not fail to fill the house."<sup>22</sup>

The second benefit performance was on the following evening, Saturday June 17, at the Town Hall in Claremont. In addition to works by Claudio Grafulla, Allen Dodworth, Alonzo Bond, and D. C. Hall, the program included five pieces arranged by Rice, who also played a cornet solo. Besides the Windsor Cornet Band, the Claremont Brass Band, made up of the young students Rice had trained for several weeks, gave its first public performance.<sup>23</sup>

19. *St. Johnsbury Caledonian*, July 8, 1854, 2.

20. *Windsor Vermont Journal*, June 30, 1854, 3.

21. The only known copy of the piano sheet music of Rice's *Windsor House Polka* is in the collection of the Vermont Historical Society.

22. *Windsor Vermont Chronicle*, June 13, 1854, 2.

23. *Claremont National Eagle*, June 15, 1854, 3.

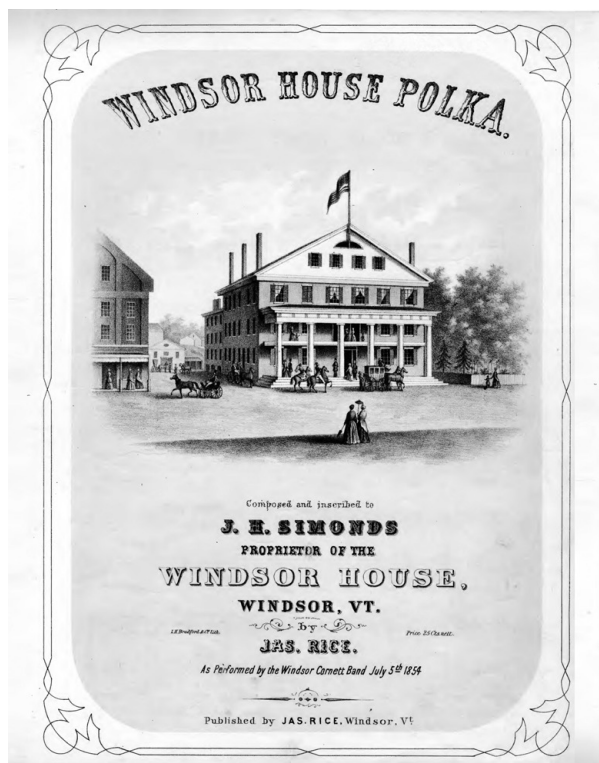


FIGURE 11. *Windsor House Polka* by James Rice, 1854. "As performed by the Windsor Cornett Band, July 5th 1854." Vermont Historical Society, Barre, VT.

**RULES FOR  
BAND PRACTICE.**

- 1st. Tune all the instruments by the 1st Soprano.
- 2d. First tune but two at a time.
- 3d. Finally tune in a body.
- 4th. No blowing or practicing between the pieces; that should be done at home.
- 5th. Begin together.
- 6th. Obey the leader or director, in every particular, in relation to the performance of the music; a Band to play well must be governed by one mind.
- 7th. Let the drums beat VERY softly, otherwise it will be impossible to hear the defects.

**Practicing in Concert, or Band Playing.**

Each member of the Band, having practiced all that has been laid down, will next take his part of the first lesson, practice that until perfectly familiar with it, so that he may be able to play it without its absorbing the whole of his attention, for it often occurs, with beginners, that they are so engaged with the difficulties (or beauties) of their own part, that they are scarcely conscious that any but themselves have been playing; this should not be so; every member should be familiar enough with his own part to be able to pay some attention to what is doing about him, and although it is praiseworthy to play his part as if the whole effect depended upon the proper execution of that part, yet, at the same time, he should remember that band playing is not simply a number of men playing certain notes with great correctness and precision, it is, in addition to all that, a number of instruments harmonizing and sympathizing with each other, as if the same sensitive-soul governed all, as one; let every member play his part and *nothing more*; if this is not difficult enough to show his abilities, let him play a solo; do not mutilate the arrangement of the music. Before beginning a new piece, look closely to the signature, observing what notes are made flat or sharp, what time it is in, and how fast it is to be played. Attend closely to the *Pianos*; it is an old and very true saying, that "the fortes always take care of themselves;" there are many shades of *forte* and *piano*, which should be carefully attended to; then there are the *forandos*, *crescendos*, *diminuendos*, *staccatos*, *slurs*, and all the other little marks connected with music, the attention to which evinces the excellence of a Band's training.

**RULES RECOMMENDED FOR THE BAND ROOM.**

- 1st. Use no profane or vulgar language.
- 2d. Keep your rehearsal room clean and orderly.
- 3d. Have good music stands and suitable lights.
- 4th. Do not take pride in being the last one at the band meetings.
- 5th. Do not attempt to lead the leader.
- 6th. And finally, remember that *noise* is not music.

**J. RICE.**

WALTON'S STEAM PRINTING ESTABLISHMENT, STATE ST., MONTPELIER, VT.

FIGURE 12. Rice's Rules for Band Practice. Rice copied his guidelines verbatim from *Dodsworth's Brass Band School*. Hazen Collection of Band Photographs and Ephemera. Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC.

### ***Northfield, 1854–1855***

Although Rice did not leave Windsor until December 1854, by October or perhaps earlier he had also established a connection with the band in Northfield, VT. *The Star of Vermont* of Northfield noted on November 4, 1854, that the Northfield Cornet Band, which Rice had taught for several weeks, had serenaded the newspaper at its office earlier in the week. The paper's editor responded enthusiastically: "The time is not very distant when the Northfield Band will acquire a celebrity which will ensure it success and a compensation for the study and pains of its members." He noted that the band hoped to purchase a new set of instruments, but "what is of equal importance [is] to retain if possible, the services of Mr. Rice as a permanent instructor."<sup>24</sup>

Rice's "Rules for Band Practice," which he signed his own name to but copied directly from *Dodworth's Brass Band School*,<sup>25</sup> included many of the instructions one might expect from a teacher . . . tune carefully, observe dynamic markings, and don't cover the other instruments with loud drums. Other admonitions were somewhat more personal: "Don't use profane or vulgar language." "Obey the leader or director, in every particular, in relation to the performance of the music; a Band to play well must be governed by one mind." "And finally, remember that noise is not music." The editor of the *Star of Vermont* praised Rice and his methods: "Having for some time past had an opportunity of witnessing the plan pursued by Mr. R., in teaching music, we deem it but an act of justice to him, to say that he is *rarely equaled as a teacher*."<sup>26</sup>

Rice remained in Northfield for only about six months, and the band, which changed its name to Rice's Cornet Band, had only a handful of performances during his time there. On the other hand, the winter of 1855 was busy for Rice as a band instructor. In addition to the band in Northfield, he worked concurrently with the bands in Westford, VT, and Underhill, VT, and in New York with the French Brass Band in Plattsburgh, the Elizabethtown Cornet Band in Elizabethtown, and the Clinton Cornet Band in Mooers.<sup>27</sup>

24. *Northfield Star of Vermont*, November 4, 1854, 2.

25. *Dodworth's Brass Band School*, 23.

26. *Northfield Star of Vermont*, November 4, 1854, 2. Italics are in the original.

27. Articles in both the *Plattsburgh Republican*, February 3, 1855, 2, and the *Northfield Star of Vermont*, February 17, 1855, 2, enumerated the bands that Rice was tutoring.

In April, excitement greeted Rice's announcement that he would organize a grand "musical convention" of brass bands to be held in Plattsburgh on May 31. The Plattsburgh and Montreal railroad joined with the Lake Champlain steamer *Francis Saltus* and other ships to offer the bands free transportation. Within days, eight bands accepted invitations to participate and a ninth was added soon after that. On the day of the festival, more than 3,000 visitors filled the town, "a multitude greater, with very few exceptions, than we remember to have seen congregated in Plattsburgh." The schedule included a parade with the bands and several American and Canadian military units, a massed band concert, an afternoon band contest, and a ball at the Cumberland House in the evening. The local newspaper called the banquet that accompanied the ball a "feast of fat things" that "we do not remember to have been surpassed in this part of the state." The bands drew the greatest praise: "When it is borne in mind that these bands were composed, not of hired or mercenary musicians, but of amateur performers—gentlemen who practice music *con amore*—the richness of the treat will be more happily appreciated."<sup>28</sup>

Buoyed by the outcome of the Plattsburgh musical convention, Rice sought to play on that success and take advantage of opportunities beyond Northfield. He made inquiries as far away as Green Bay, WI: "James Rice, of Northfield, Vermont, a teacher of brass bands, writes to ask us if there is an opening for his profession in this region. We do not know. If such services are needed in any of our Fox River villages, we have no hesitation in recommending him."<sup>29</sup> In the end, he remained in Vermont.

The *Burlington Free Press* took note of the success of the Plattsburgh festival, particularly that "over three thousand people from other towns [had] collected in Plattsburgh on the occasion." "It is said, too, and it couldn't well be otherwise," continued the paper, "that the Burlington Cornet Band was *the* band of the day. This was the first convention of the kind ever held in these regions. Who will go in for a second, and why should it not be at Burlington?"<sup>30</sup> Rice apparently took this as a personal invitation. He left Northfield and moved to Burlington to take charge of the Burlington Cornet Band in August 1855.

28. *Plattsburgh Republican*, April 14, 1855, 2; April 28, 1855, 2; May 5, 1855, 2; May 26, 1855, 2; and June 2, 1855, 2.

29. *Green Bay Advocate*, June 14, 1855, 3.

30. *Burlington Daily Free Press*, June 4, 1855, 2.



### ***Burlington, 1855–1859***

By the time he arrived in Burlington, Rice had circulated a four-page brochure that detailed the broad range of services he was prepared to offer. The leaflet (fig. 13) also contained endorsements from representatives of the militia units that participated in the Plattsburgh event who praised Rice as a “competent teacher of Military Brass Bands,” and “the proficiency exhibited by six or seven Bands (instructed by him) at the great Musical convention . . . is a guaranty of his superior qualifications as a teacher and director of Bands.” Further, the military men judged Rice to be “always reliable and prompt in all business matters” and, perhaps equally important, “a gentleman of correct morals and habits.”<sup>31</sup>

Rice remained in Burlington for just over four years, and at various times he was leader of the Burlington Cornet Band, played cornet in quadrille bands, instructed numerous bands in the area, sold band instruments and music, and developed connections in Boston that took him away from Burlington for months at a time. Appropriately, he customarily referred to Burlington not as his home but rather as “Head Quarters.”

The Burlington Cornet Band, which officially named Rice to be its leader on August 16, 1855, was popular with the people of Burlington, but the town sometimes viewed it through the lens of civic pride rather than with the eye, and ear, of a critic. In anticipation of the band’s contributions to the Fourth of July celebration in 1854, the *Burlington Free Press* called it “the largest, and without flattery, the best band in the State.”<sup>32</sup> A few months before Rice arrived, the paper pronounced effusively, “The band is really one of the best in New England, and bids fair soon to rank above the Dodworth’s [professional band of New York].”<sup>33</sup> Burlington was happy with its band, and not everyone welcomed Rice’s appointment—two of the band’s cornet players resigned in protest.<sup>34</sup>

Some people clearly considered employing Rice, a professional, to be leader of the band and replacing a local amateur leader as unnecessarily “bringing in an outsider.” That view mirrored the controversy spreading throughout the state regarding the practice of hiring professional bands

31. A copy of the brochure is in the collection of the Vermont Historical Society.

32. *Burlington Daily Free Press*, June 29, 1854, 2.

33. *Burlington Daily Free Press*, March 3, 1855, 2.

34. *Burlington Daily Free Press*, August 20, 1855, 2.

from Boston and New York rather than engaging local bands to provide the music for special occasions. Under the heading “Music at Fairs,” a disgruntled observer in Montpelier wrote a satirical article for the local newspaper in support of home musicians:

‘The Boston Brass Band, Mr. Hall Leader, will enliven the ground with their music’—*Programme of \_\_\_\_\_ County Fair*. And why not send to Boston for the great cake, great squash and cow to crown the occasion? Why not import pretty women and brave men to manage and adorn the scene? Or why not adjourn the whole business to Boston and have it all there where every want can be so easily supplied? . . . We have twenty or more Brass Bands, Cornet Bands, local Bands in Vermont, and why not employ home skill for home exhibitions? . . . Would the same remarks also apply to College Commencements and exhibitions, and to every literary exhibition within our borders? . . . Educate those farmers. Let them not be merely stupid starers, but thoughtful rational beings.<sup>35</sup>

The 1856 commencement exercises of the University of Vermont presented the opportunity for Rice and the Burlington band to prove their value to the community. When the senior class announced that it had secured the Burlington Cornet Band for the summer commencement exercises, the *Free Press* reacted with approval:

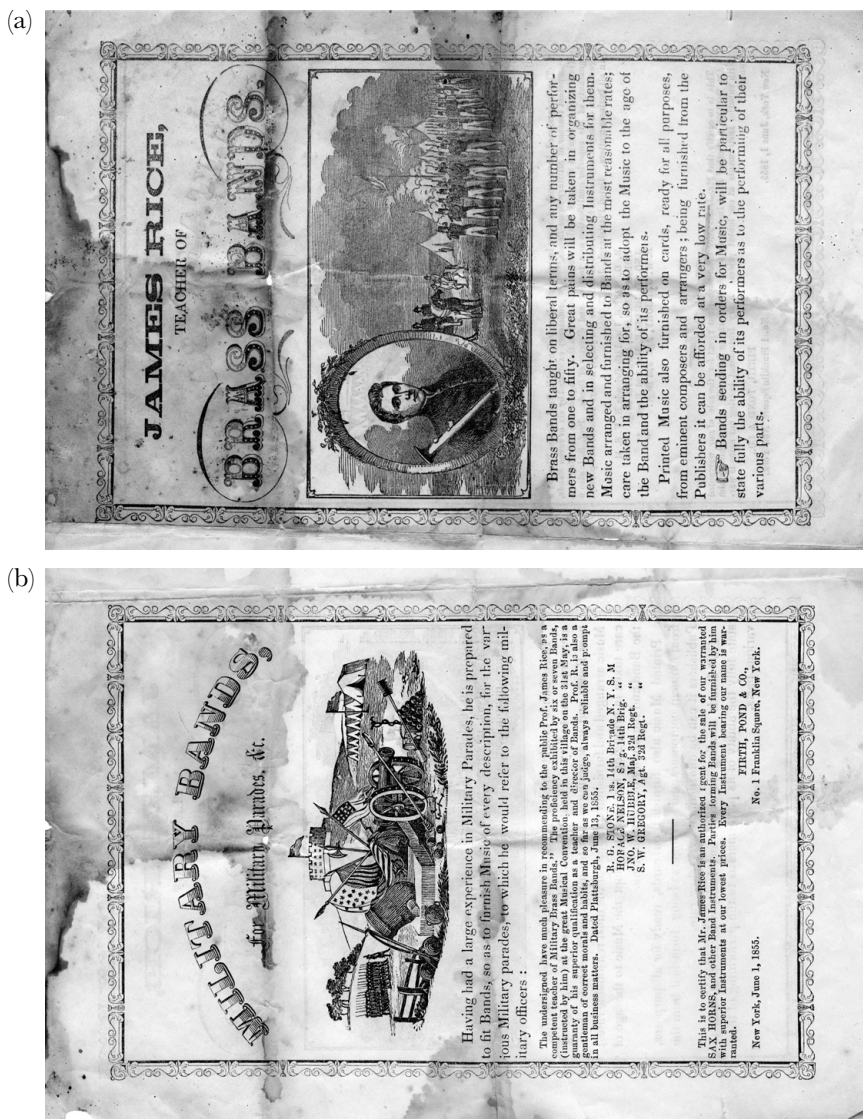
A good deal of money has been paid in years past, to Bands from the cities, but the music has not always, by any means, been worth the price paid. The boys have paid too dear for their whistle. The Burlington Band is a good one as good as any, not composed of professional musicians, can very well be, and if not quite equal to the Germania [of Boston] or Dodworth’s [of New York], it is our own, and we believe in the encouragement of home industry.<sup>36</sup>

Enthusiasm among the students was not universal, however, and the motion to hire the Burlington band passed by a slim margin. Some offered to engage “at their own expense” either Dodworth’s Band from New York or Hall’s Band from Boston, a proposal that was not accepted.<sup>37</sup> In the days after the commencement, some students held to the opinion

35. *Montpelier Vermont Watchman & State Journal*, September 25, 1857, 2.

36. *Burlington Daily Free Press*, April 8, 1856, 2.

37. *Burlington Daily Free Press*, August 11, 1856, 2.



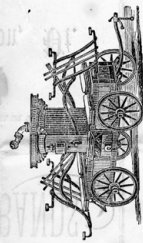
(c)

**MUSIC FURNISHED  
FOR DANCING AND PROMENADE PARTIES.**



I have connected with my business, Musicians for forming a Quadrille Band of various number of pieces, so that I am prepared to furnish all orders for Music, to large or small parties. All of which particular attention will be given to suit the various calls.

**FIRE DEPARTMENT.**



During my experiences in Military Parades I have prepared to meet the wants of the Fire Companies, and will at all times furnish the best of Parade and Quadrille Music.

**MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS**

of every description furnished at the manufacturers prices. Also all kinds of Musical Merchandise furnished to order and at the lowest market price. Particular attention paid to furnishing Brass Bands with Instruments, &c.  
Brass Band together with Quadrille Music furnished for all occasions, at short notice.

(d)

**JAMES RICE,**  
TEACHER OF  
**BRASS BANDS.**

**HEAD QUARTERS.**

**Burlington, Vt.**

Huttl & Dow, Printers, Pittsburgh, N. Y.

that a “city band” would have been better, but the *Free Press* concluded: “The music for the various celebrations was furnished by the Burlington Cornet Band under the able leadership of Mr. James Rice. The band did itself credit, gained many warm encomiums and demonstrated the folly of sending abroad for commencement music while we have such a good band at home.”<sup>38</sup>

### ***Boston, 1856 and 1857***

In February 1856, Alonzo Bond commenced a month-long series of newspaper ads in the *Boston Herald* for Bond’s Cornet Band, one of the city’s leading bands. The ads were unusual in that they included a complete list of the personnel of the nineteen-piece band.<sup>39</sup> James Rice appeared in the roster as one of the band’s three sopranos, or cornets (fig. 14). Assuming Rice played the entire season with Bond in Boston, he would have been away from Vermont from April or May until the fall when cold weather set in and the quadrille band and teaching season began. He apparently arranged with Bond to return to Burlington to lead the Burlington Cornet Band for important engagements such as the university commencement activities.

Late in the summer, probably with a recommendation from Bond, Rice became the leader of the Boston Cornet Band. The band was less than a year old and was established when the National Brass Band voted to adopt the name at its annual meeting on January 26, 1856. The members elected John Silloway, leader of the former band, to continue in the same capacity with the newly christened Boston Cornet Band.<sup>40</sup> The opening that Rice filled arose when Silloway left the band for unknown reasons sometime around the middle of August.<sup>41</sup> Word circulated in Burlington

38. *Burlington Weekly Free Press*, August 8, 1856, 2.

39. The ad for Bond’s Cornet Band first appeared in the *Boston Herald* on February 26, 1856, 2, and it continued to run regularly throughout March.

40. *Boston Herald*, January 28, 1856, 4. The lineage of the “Boston Cornet Band” bears further study. Various Boston Bands used that name from the mid-1840s until the 1880s or later.

41. The Boston Cornet Band’s last ad that listed Silloway as leader was in the *Boston Herald* on August 15, 1856, 3.

## New Advertisements.

### BOND'S CORNET BAND.

[Organized 1850.]

CONDUCTOR AND LEADER.....ALONZO BOND.

*Head Quarters, 267 Washington street.*



Are prepared as a Brass, Reed or String Band—uniform (new) same as worn in 1855. The parts will be sustained the ensuing season, as a Military Band, by the following gentlemen:—

**SOPRANO.**  
Alonzo Bond,  
W. O. Brooks,  
James Rice,

**ALTO.**  
G. E. Kinsley,  
H. N. Blake,  
B. White,  
P. F. Sawin.

**TENOR.**  
B. Graves,  
S. White.

**BARITONES.**  
J. Stratton,  
L. White.

**BASSO.**  
G. A. Poor,  
B. W. Waterhouse,  
Ara Clarke,  
J. M. Sampson.

**DRUMS, &c.**  
Wm. H. Folger,  
P. M. Kelley,  
B. Bennett,  
N. J. Baldwin.

Office at HENRY PRYOR'S Music Store, 33 Court st.  
feb26 1m B. A. CARTER, AGENT.

FIGURE 14. Newspaper ad for Bond's Cornet Band of Boston. The personnel list included James Rice as one of the three Soprano (cornet) players. *Boston Herald*, February 26, 1856.

that Silloway had been “discharged.”<sup>42</sup> Under Rice’s leadership, the band continued to play for militia activities and political events until the outdoor season ended in the middle of November and he returned to Vermont.

Rice likely knew as early as January 1857 after the Boston Cornet Band’s annual meeting that he would return to Boston as its leader, but he continued with his teaching in Vermont until spring. The newspaper in Vergennes, one of the towns where Rice was instructing the band, announced in early April that he would soon return to Boston: “The friends of J. Rice (and their name is legion) will be pleased to learn of his appointment to the leadership of the Boston Cornet Band. . . . The evidence of his ability as a teacher of instrumental music is apparent throughout the State, and his pupils may well feel gratified by the honorable and lucrative position which his talents have won for him.”<sup>43</sup>

Rice arrived in Boston in May, and from that time until the end of October, Boston newspapers reported on a steady stream of militia parades and encampments; excursions and picnics; Fourth of July activities; firemen’s musters and parades; serenades for dignitaries; and other events for which the Boston Cornet Band provided the music. The band’s most notable venture outside of Boston was a trip of several days to Philadelphia where the Schuylkill Hose Company engaged the band to march with it in the city’s grand Fire Department Parade, which attracted thousands of spectators to watch the procession of a hundred fire companies from several states with their lavishly decorated parade vehicles and some sixty bands.<sup>44</sup>

Only in its second year, the Boston Cornet Band was one of a dozen or more active bands in the Boston area, and it worked in the shadows of several long-established and highly respected groups, including the Boston Brigade Band, the Boston Brass Band, and P. S. Gilmore’s Salem Brass Band. Even so, Rice’s band drew its share of positive recognition. “Last night,” reported the *Boston Herald* on August 14, “the Boston Cornet Band, Rice, leader, serenaded some of our citizen and members of the press. Their music, which was much admired by all who listened to it, demonstrated the great improvement made by the band during the last

42. *Burlington Daily Free Press*, October 20, 1856, 2.

43. *Vergennes Citizen*, April 3, 1857, 2.

44. *Boston Herald*, October 8, 1857, 4.

year.”<sup>45</sup> A week later, the *Herald* noted: “The Boston Cornet Band, Mr. Rice leader, were engaged in serenading at the South and West part of the city last evening, and long will the delighted music which they discoursed be remembered by those who were fortunate enough to hear it.”<sup>46</sup> When it accompanied the Hancock Engine Company No. 1 of Charlestown to the firemen’s muster in Keene, NH, the townspeople considered it to be a “city” band among the local area bands that participated. A reporter noted: “The music was excellent for a ‘country’ occasion. The Boston Cornet Band were of course pre-eminent for their skill.”<sup>47</sup>

The Boston Cornet Band’s most significant performance under Rice’s leadership was a promenade concert at Boston’s Music Hall on Monday, August 24, 1857, near the conclusion of a series of concerts that had drawn a response far beyond expectations. In mid-July, under the headline “Music for the Million,” the Music Hall put forth its plan to remove the seating from the floor of the hall to accommodate a week of promenade concerts by Boston’s six leading bands.<sup>48</sup> With admission only fifteen cents, the performances were affordable to almost everyone. The concerts, which began on July 27, were a hit, and managers added a second week. A third week followed, and then another. When Gilmore’s Salem Brass Band played the “last” concert on August 29, the series had grown from the initially announced six concerts in one week to twenty-three performances over a span of five weeks. The schedule for the final week included a concert by Rice’s Boston Cornet Band, now added to the original six bands. Alonzo Bond probably lobbied for including Rice’s band.

Although the Boston Cornet Band had played for numerous parades, musters, serenades, and excursions that summer, these were mostly outdoor, relatively casual events. The Music Hall performance was the band’s first indoor, formal appearance, and advertisements alerted patrons that “The Boston Cornet Band [will] give their first concert in Boston.” The program ranged from Verdi’s overture to *Rigoletto* to pieces by popular band composers, including Dodworth and Grafulla, to a selection of national airs. Also included was a medley arranged by Rice that

45. *Boston Herald*, August 14, 1857, 4.

46. *Boston Herald*, August 21, 1857, 4.

47. *Keene Cheshire Republican*, September 16, 1857, 2.

48. *Boston Evening Transcript*, July 18, 1857, 2. The six bands scheduled to perform were the Germania Band, Hall’s Boston Brass Band, Gilmore’s Salem Brass Band, the Boston Brigade Band, Bond’s Cornet Band, and Flagg’s Cornet Band..



incorporated “My Mary Ann,” “Root Hog,” and other popular songs of the day.<sup>49</sup>

The concert by P. S. Gilmore’s Salem Band that officially concluded the series attracted an overflow audience, and many people who could not find room on the floor listened from the lobby. As the program neared its end, Gilmore announced that six of the bands from the series, including Rice’s Boston Cornet Band, would present a “Monster Concert” the following Saturday evening. The plan called for each band to play two pieces individually and to join at the end of the first half of the program as a massed band.<sup>50</sup>

Unfortunately, the concert was not the grand success that performers and audience alike anticipated. Both Gilmore’s Salem Brass Band and Rice’s Boston Cornet Band failed to appear. The absence of Gilmore’s Salem Brass Band, which was to play the concert’s finale, “created an excited scene of dissatisfaction.” Gilmore subsequently calmed the upset public when he explained in a letter published the next week in the Boston press that his band was unable to appear because he had been bedridden for more than a week, “barely escaping the jaws of death” and still in no condition to “undergo the laborious pleasure of blowing a wind instrument.”<sup>51</sup>

Rice had no “life threatening” illness to fall back on as an excuse for the Boston Cornet Band’s not playing. He withdrew when it became clear that several of the principal members of the band would be unable to perform due to prior commitments, and “the band did not feel that they could do justice to themselves by appearing.” The critic of the *Boston Morning Journal* was harsh in expressing his disapproval of Rice and called the absence of his band “shabby and ungenerous.”<sup>52</sup> Beyond the initial sting of the critic’s barbs, however, the Boston Cornet Band suffered no apparent further consequences and continued with a busy schedule of performances until the season ended in late October.

49. *Boston Herald*, August 24, 1857, 4.

50. *Boston Evening Transcript*, August 31, 1857, 2, and September 5, 1857, 2. Of the six bands originally announced for the series, Hall’s Brass Band does not appear on the published program for the concert.

51. *Boston Morning Journal*, September 7, 1857, 2.

52. *Boston Morning Journal*, September 7, 1857, 2.

### *Burlington, 1857–1858*

Several weeks before the 1857 season in Boston ended, Rice began to prepare for his return to Vermont by placing a series of ads in Burlington area newspapers announcing that he would form his own six-piece band with musicians from the Boston Cornet Band. “Having had many earnest solicitations from my friends in Vermont, to return to them in the Fall,” the ads declared, “I have concluded to do so, and at the same time prevailed on some fine talent of Boston to take a trip to the country and remain there the Winter season.” With each member of the band able to double on both a string and brass instrument, the group could perform either as an orchestra or as a brass band and furnish music for “Balls, Cotillion Parties, Promenade Concerts, Private Parties, Weddings, &c., &c.”<sup>53</sup> In September, Rice placed an ad that listed the names and instruments of the Boston musicians who would make up the band, which he now called “Rice’s Quadrille Band and Serenade Choir of the Boston Cornet Band (fig. 15).”<sup>54</sup> The implication that the quadrille band was actually part of the Boston Cornet Band apparently met with objections, and by November, he had changed the billing to “Rice’s Quadrille Band, formerly of the Boston Cornet Band.”<sup>55</sup> Rice completed the band with the addition of J. B. Holmberg, the popular Burlington musician who played violin and clarinet and served as the band’s conductor when needed. One of the Boston musicians, trombonist S. F. Grover, was eventually forced to remain in the city due to an injury: “Mr. S. F. Grover, a member of the Boston Cornet Band, had two of his fingers broken on Sunday evening by stumbling over a chair in the dark. By this accident Mr. Grover is obliged to give up a valuable professional engagement contracted by him in Burlington, Vt.”<sup>56</sup>

In addition to playing with his quadrille band and teaching several area bands, including those in Vergennes, Ferrisburgh, and St. Albans, Rice returned to his former position as leader of the Burlington Cornet Band, which also engaged J. B. Holmberg to be its director. The division of responsibilities for Rice and Holmberg is not altogether clear, but

53. *Vergennes Citizen*, August 14, 1857, 3.

54. *Burlington Weekly Sentinel*, September 18, 1857, 3.

55. *Burlington Daily Free Press*, November 6, 1857, 2.

56. *Boston Daily Evening Bee*, December 4, 1857, 2.

**Rice's Quadrille Band and Serenade Choir,**  
—OF THE—  
**BOSTON CORNET BAND,**

**W**ILL BE IN BURLINGTON, Vt., from November 1st to April 1st, 1858.

J. RICE, (Leader of the Serenade Choir,).....Solo Cornet and Musette.  
N. D. ADAMS, (Leader of the Orchestra,).....1st Violin and Solo Ebo Corno.  
B. W. WATERHOUSE,....Double Basso and Basso Tuba.  
HENRY FREEMAN,.....Clarionet and Ebo Corno.  
S. F. GROVER,.....Trombone and Kolgnerogian.  
F. CROSSMAN,.....2d Violin and 2d Cornet.

**Music furnished either as a Brass Band or Orchestra. Orders can be addressed to any Member, or left at Patridge's Music Store.**

**38-m5**

FIGURE 15. Ad for Rice's Quadrille Band. *Burlington Weekly Sentinel*, September 25, 1857.

Rice certainly tutored the band, probably led rehearsals, played cornet, and filled the role that a concertmaster would in a symphony orchestra. Holmberg, who was not a brass player, most likely did not play in the band but served as conductor when needed and managed certain administrative duties. The band responded enthusiastically, purchasing new uniforms and investing almost a thousand dollars in a complete set of ten silver instruments from Graves & Company of Boston. The *Free Press* praised the band's new instruments as being "exquisitely finished and of uncommonly fine tone," and predicted:

with these [instruments] and a new and tasteful uniform, of blue and buff, with an addition of musical talent, under the leadership of James Rice, with Prof. Holmberg as musical director, the Band will take the field for the coming season, in force. We are glad to see these indications of a praise-worthy ambition in the Band, and we trust they will receive the encouragement which, as the best band this State has ever known and one of the best bands in the country, they will deserve.<sup>57</sup>

57. *Burlington Daily Free Press*, March 23, 1858, 2.

With the goal of raising funds to cover the expense of its new uniforms and instruments, the band opened the season on May 25 with a formal concert in the Burlington Town Hall rather than with the customary serenades and other outdoor performances (fig. 16). In its announcement of the concert, the *Weekly Sentinel* promised that the band with its “new and splendid set of instruments” and “under the tuition of Mr. Rice, one of the best musicians in the country,” would offer “the best instrumental music ever heard within our limits.”<sup>58</sup> Selections by violinist-director J. B. Holmberg, pianist S. C. Moore, and tenor Herman Molt added further interest to the program. After the concert, the *Free Press* called it one of the most successful ever given in Burlington, both in the size of the audience and the level of enjoyment of the music. “The band,” noted the paper, “combines an unusual array of natural talent, and it has profited very greatly by its opportunities for superior instruction [from Rice]. . . . We are not afraid to send our Band out by the side of any other we know of, and we should ask no odds of any Band not composed of professional musicians, and small odds of any one whatever.”<sup>59</sup> As the summer progressed, the band played for an array of events, including the large Fourth of July firemen’s muster in Burlington, several militia events, fraternal gatherings, a series of free concerts on the green, steamboat excursions, and the state fair in Burlington.

### ***A Cornet by Fiske and Instruments by Graves & Co.***

In July 1856, while Rice was in Boston playing in Bond’s Cornet Band, his “business card” appeared as an ad in the *Burlington Free Press*. The continuing presence of the ad in the newspaper for the next year confirms that he considered his engagements in Boston to be seasonal, and he had no intention of leaving Burlington permanently.<sup>60</sup>


The ad includes an illustration of a distinctive type of circular cornet made by Isaac Fiske of Worcester, MA (fig. 17, fig. 18). The identical engraving, identified as “Dodworth’s Improved Cornet, with 5 Valves,”

58. *Burlington Weekly Sentinel*, May 21, 1858, 2.

59. *Burlington Weekly Free Press*, May 28, 1858, 2.

60. Rice’s “card” with the engraving of a circular cornet first appeared in the *Burlington Daily Free Press* on July 23, 1856, 2. It ran several dozen times during the next year and last appeared on July 29, 1857.

**CONCERT**  
BY THE  
**BURLINGTON CORNET BAND,**



AT THE  
**TOWN HALL,**  
TUESDAY EVENING, May 25th, 1858.

**J. B. Holmberg,** - - - Director.  
**James Rice,** - - - Leader.

The Band will be assisted on this occasion by  
**S. C. Moore & Hermann Molt.**

**Programme:**  
PART I.

1. INTRODUCTION—from *Lucrecia Borgia*,  
*Donizetti.*  
BAND.
2. DUETT, for two Cornets, - - *Grafulla.*  
BAND.
3. LE CARNIVAL DE VENICE, (by request) *Jaell.*  
S. C. MOORE.
4. ECLIPSE POLKA, - - - *Koenig.*  
BAND.
5. DUETT, for Two Violins, - - - *Mozart.*  
J. B. HOLEMBERG & Pupil, L. H. TURK.
6. EVENING DEW WALTZ, - - *Holmberg.*  
BAND.
7. ETHAN ALLEN QUICKSTEP - *Schneidzuiger.*  
BAND.

INTERMISSION.—Five Minutes.

PART II.

1. HOWARD GUARDS' QUICKSTEP, - *Grafulla.*  
BAND.
2. STAR OF HOPE, - - - - *Bond.*  
BAND.
3. VIOLIN SOLO, - - - - *Artot.*  
J. B. HOLMBERG,
4. AIR—DEPARTED DAYS, - - - *Lewis.*  
BAND.
5. SWISS SONG,  
Prof. HERMANN MOLT.
6. BOXER QUICKSTEP, - - - - *Bond.*  
BAND.
7. NATIONAL AIRS,  
BAND.

Piano from the manufactory of J. MUNSON,  
Burlington, Vt.

Doors open at 7—Concert to commence  
at 8 o'clock.

Tickets, 25 Cents.

To be had at the MUSIC STORES, and at  
BRINSMID & HILDRETH'S Jewelry Store,  
College Street.

FIGURE 16. Program for the Burlington Cornet Band's first performance with its new set of instruments by Graves & Company of Boston. *Burlington Daily Times*, May 22, 1858.

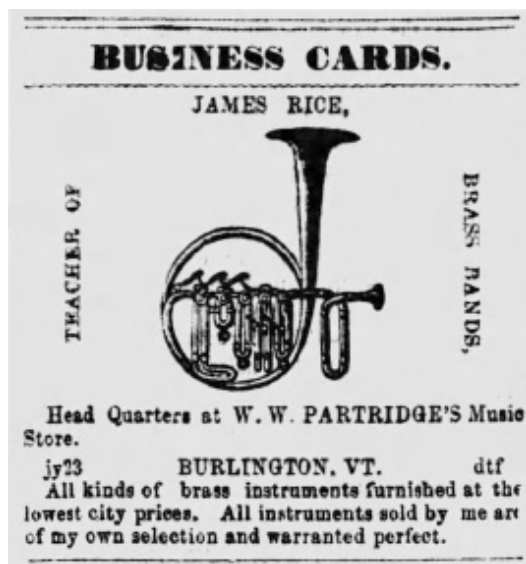


FIGURE 17. Rice's ad with the engraving of an Isaac Fiske five-valve circular cornet first appeared in the *Burlington Free Press* on July 23, 1856. It ran several dozen times during the next year.



FIGURE 18. Isaac Fiske five-valve circular cornet. Elrod Collection, Germantown, MD.

appeared with a description of the instrument in *Dodworth's Brass Band School*. Dodworth wrote: "This Cornet has, in addition to the ordinary valve, what is called a cut-off valve, which takes from, instead of adding to, the length of the instrument, like the ordinary valve. . . . The engraving is from one made by Mr. Isaac Fiske, of Worcester, Mass., a maker of deserved celebrity."<sup>61</sup> Rice's use of this specific illustration was probably not a random choice but rather suggests that at this point—as Dodworth recommended—he played a Fisk circular cornet as well as his over-the-shoulder bugle, depending on the nature of the engagement. Dodworth wrote: "In selecting instruments, attention should be paid to the use intended; if for military purposes only, those with bells behind, over the shoulder, are preferable, as they throw all the tone to those who are marching to it, but for any other purpose are not so good. . . . For general purposes, those with the bells upward, like the Sax Horn, are most convenient and should be adopted by all whose business is not exclusively military."<sup>62</sup> If Rice was playing a cornet made by Fiske, who was also one of the possible makers of his over-the-shoulder bugle, it adds circumstantial evidence to the possibility that he could have established a relationship with Fiske during the time he may have worked as a machinist in Worcester, as the city directory of 1852 suggests.

Rice's ad also noted: "All kinds of brass instruments furnished at the lowest city prices. All instruments sold by me are of my own selection and warranted perfect." Earlier, Rice's promotional brochure indicated that as an "authorized agent" for Firth, Pond, & Co. of New York, he could supply saxhorns and other band instruments. Firth, Pond, & Co. sold imports, which generally did not match the quality of American-made instruments. From the tone and wording of the ad, one can infer that Rice had added a source for high quality American made instruments, which a later advertisement confirms.

Those wishing to purchase Brass or Silver Instrument of any description are invited to call before purchasing or ordering elsewhere. Mr. Rice visits the various manufactories of Boston and New York at short intervals and from his long experience in the Band Business and extensive acquaintance with the manufactures of this country and importers of foreign instruments he is confident he can give those wishing to purchase an advantage not surpassed in Vermont.<sup>63</sup>

61. *Dodworth's Brass Band School*, 23.

62. *Dodworth's Brass Band School*, 12.

63. *Montpelier Green Mountain Freeman*, May 19, 1859, 3.

Still another ad states, “Mr. Rice is the only Agent in Vermont for a large Manufacturing Company of BRASS INSTRUMENTS.”<sup>64</sup>

Evidence suggests that the “large manufacturing company” was probably Graves & Company of Boston. Shortly after he returned to Burlington from Boston and resumed leadership of the Burlington Cornet Band, it bought a full set of Graves instruments in March 1858, no doubt on Rice’s recommendation.<sup>65</sup> Although only speculation, Rice may have been involved in the purchase of a set of Graves silver instruments in September 1859 by the Northfield Cornet Band, which he led before moving to Burlington.<sup>66</sup> After his move to Montpelier to take charge of the Montpelier Cornet Band, that band also bought a full set of silver Graves instruments in February 1860.<sup>67</sup>

### ***Montpelier, 1859–1861***

By the end of 1858, Rice had given up his position as leader of the Burlington Cornet Band and determined to focus on teaching bands. He made his intentions known in an advertisement in the *Burlington Daily Times*: (fig. 19) “Having taken several Bands in the vicinity for instruction for one year from date, I shall devote my whole attention to their interest, and other Schools that come under my charge during the year, and any one of them wishing my assistance at any time will receive prompt attention.” He added: “N.B.—I receive music monthly from [D. L.] Downing, [Claudio] Grafulla, [Thomas] Coats, [D. C.] Hall, [Alonzo] Bond, and others.”<sup>68</sup>

Despite Rice’s declaration that he would devote his full time to teaching, the fledgling Montpelier Cornet Band, only weeks old, persuaded him to move to the capital city and become the band’s instructor and leader.<sup>69</sup>

64. *Montpelier Daily Journal*, November 12, 1859, 3.

65. *Burlington Daily Free Press*, March 23, 1858, 2.

66. *Montpelier Vermont Watchman & State Journal*, September 2, 1859, 2.

67. *Montpelier Vermont Watchman & State Journal*, March 2, 1860, 2.

68. The ad appeared for the first time in the *Burlington Daily Times*, January 11, 1859, 3, and it continued to run almost daily through the month of July. The mention of “Schools” referred not to teaching music or bands in academic settings, but rather to his “classes” for instructing bands.

69. An article about the band in the *Montpelier Daily Green Mountain Freeman*, August 30,



**Music by the Band.**

**H**AVING taken several Bands in the vicinity for instruction for one year from date, I shall devote my whole attention to their interest, and other Schools that come under my charge during the year, and any one of them wishing my assistance at any time will receive prompt attention.

Address **J. RICE, Burlington.**  
**N. B.—I receive music monthly from Downing, Grifflah, Coats, Hull, Bond and others.**  
**Burlington, Vt., Jan 10, 1859** **198d & wtf**

FIGURE 19. Announcement that Rice would devote full time to instructing bands. *Burlington Daily Times*, January 12, 1859.

Newspaper advertisements that listed Montpelier as Rice's home base first appeared in May.<sup>70</sup> The ads promoted Rice as a source for band instruments, both for sale and to rent, as well as his abilities as a teacher of bands (fig. 20).

Under Rice's leadership, the Montpelier Cornet Band did not emphasize the usual summer firemen's musters, militia activities, and concerts in the park, but rather sought to establish a more sophisticated presence in the community through a series of indoor promenade concerts. For the first of these performances, on August 15, 1859, in addition to the band, Rice arranged for many of Montpelier's leading musicians to participate, including a chorus, vocalists, and piano, guitar, and flute soloists. The band played mostly concert pieces and only one march, Rice's *Eagle Ledge Quick Step*. Rice also performed a cornet solo. The concert was a hit. A review in the *Vermont Watchman* was unrestrained in its praise: "To say that the concert was a perfect success is but a feeble expression of the entire satisfaction that was given to the large company present, by everyone who had a part to perform in the Programme." The writer singled out Rice: "The Cornet Solo . . . by Mr. J. Rice, the popular director of the Band, was a *capital thing of itself, most capitally* executed." The band received perhaps the highest compliment of all: "The playing of the Band took us

1861, 2, noted that it had been organized in January 1859.

70. The earliest ad that listed Montpelier as his home base appeared in the *Montpelier Green Mountain Freeman* on May 19, 1859, 3.

all by surprise, for where we had expected the mere introductory lessons from schoolboys of six months' practice, we found the skill and harmony of a thoroughly drilled company."<sup>71</sup>

The winter was a productive time for the band. In February, working through Rice, it purchased a full set of silver instruments from Graves & Company of Boston. Also, building on the success of the first Promenade Concert, during the next six months the band organized four more concerts with the same format. Each one resulted in even more enthusiastic notices. After the last of the concerts, on March 6, 1860, the reviewer observed: "The Promenade Concert, given by the Band on Tuesday evening last was, if possible, more successful than any yet given. The continued and successful practice, under their skillful teacher, Prof. J. Rice, and the additional advantage of the new Silver Instruments, served to render this the best of the many treats prepared for our citizens by the Band [during] the present winter."<sup>72</sup>

Another promenade concert on February 11, 1861, was probably the Montpelier Cornet Band's final performance under Rice's direction. The announcement of the concert in the *Vermont Watchman* implied that the band might not continue the series: "Those who had the pleasure of attending the excellent promenade concerts given by the Montpelier Cornet Band last winter will be gratified to know that at least *one more* is to be given at the new Village Hall some evening next week."<sup>73</sup> By the time the band played for the Fourth of July festivities, Horatio Fales of Boston had moved to Montpelier to take charge of the band.

Rice's intentions after he stepped down as leader of the Montpelier Band are not altogether clear. He continued to teach the band in Greensboro, VT, and possibly other bands, through the spring and into the summer (fig. 21). "The Greensboro Brass Band under the instruction of Mr. James Rice," noted the local paper in late June, "is alive and prosperous, and not likely to fall a whit behind the best bands in the neighboring towns."<sup>74</sup>

71. *Montpelier Vermont Watchman & State Journal*, August 19, 1859, 2.

72. *Montpelier Vermont Watchman & State Journal*, March 9, 1860, 2.

73. *Montpelier Vermont Watchman & State Journal*, February 8., 1861, 2.

74. *Greensboro Caledonian*. Quoted in *Hyde Park Lamoille Newsdealer*, June 28, 1861, 1.

# **J. RICE, Teacher of Brass Bands, MONTPELIER, VT**

**Head Quarters at Geo. W. Wilder's Music  
Store, Freeman Building, State st.**

**T**HOSE wishing to purchase Brass or Silver Instruments of any description are invited to call before purchasing or ordering elsewhere. Mr. Rice visits the various manufacturing of Boston and New York at short intervals and from his long experience in the Band Business and extensive acquaintance with the manufacturers of this country and importers of foreign instruments he is confident he can give those wishing to purchase an advantage not surpassed in Vermont. At his Head Quarters, (Geo. W. Wilder's Music Store) will be found an extensive stock of all kinds of Instruments and

## **Musical Merchandise.**

All orders sent by mail, or left with Mr. Wilder, will receive prompt attention.

New Bands forming and not wishing to purchase instruments, can hire for three or six months.

Mr. Rice has the privilege and takes pleasure in referring to the following Bands, which have been classes of his the past season: 177tf

ST. ALBANS CORNET BAND,  
SWANTON CORNET BAND,  
FRANKLIN CORNET BAND,  
SHELBURN CORNET BAND,  
CRAFT-BURY CORNET BAND,  
WAITSFIELD CORNET BAND,  
HARDWICK CORNET BAND  
STANSTEAD CORNET BAND, C. E.  
FRELEIGHSBURGH CORNET BAND, C. E.

FIGURE 20. Rice's first ad after moving to Montpelier listed nine bands that he had instructed during the winter of 1858-1859. *Montpelier Green Mountain Freeman*, May 19, 1859, 3.

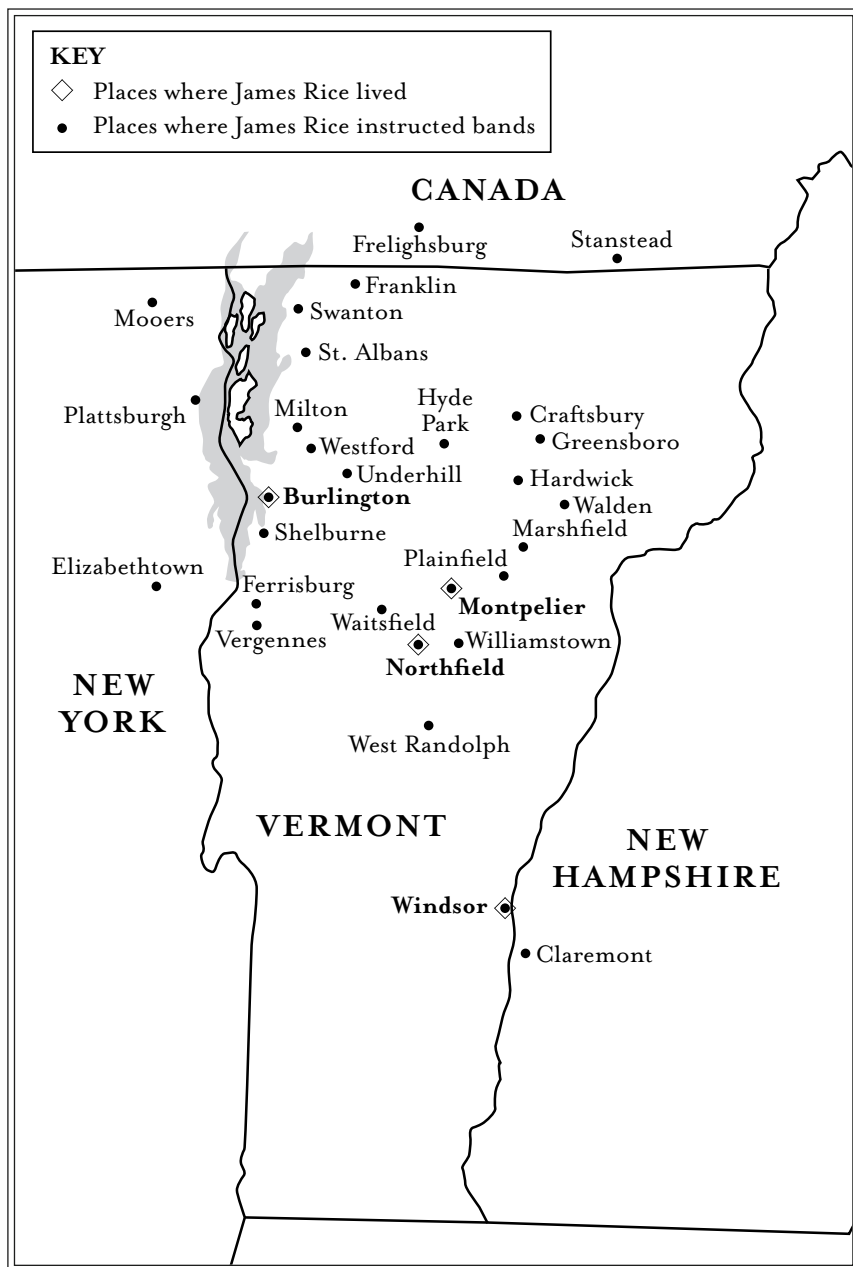


FIGURE 21. Map of locations where Rice instructed bands between 1854 and 1861.

**James Rice, “Teacher of Brass Bands,” and His Unique Instrument**

The outbreak of the Civil War in 1861 brought to an end Rice’s tenure as a teacher of brass bands and his business activities as a provider of music and instruments. During the eight years from 1854 to 1861, he instructed bands in at least twenty-three known locations in Vermont, several in the bordering states of New Hampshire and New York, as well as in at least two places in Canada.<sup>75</sup>

The daguerreotype of James Rice with his over-the-shoulder bugle and the engraving derived from the photograph are the only known representations of the arrangement of valves and keys shown on the instrument. The instrument itself is not known to have survived. Probably made around 1852 by either E. G. Wright or Isaac Fiske, it presents a unique approach to the use of both valves and keys on the same instrument that contrasts with the two examples by E. G. Wright in the collections of the Henry Ford Museum and the National Music Museum as well as the instrument depicted on the sheet music cover of *Shelton’s Quick Step*.

Additionally, Rice’s previously overlooked contributions as a performer, band leader, instructor of thirty or more bands in Vermont and neighboring states, and supplier of instruments and music for bands are noteworthy and shed new light on the life of a working professional band musician during the 1850s.

75. In addition to dozens of newspaper articles that mention Rice’s connections to various bands, three advertisements in 1859 included lists of seventeen different bands he had instructed. See *Montpelier Green Mountain Freeman*, May 19, 1859, 3; *Montpelier Green Mountain Freeman*, October 6, 1859, 4; *Montpelier Walton’s Daily Legislative Journal*, November 12, 1859, 3.