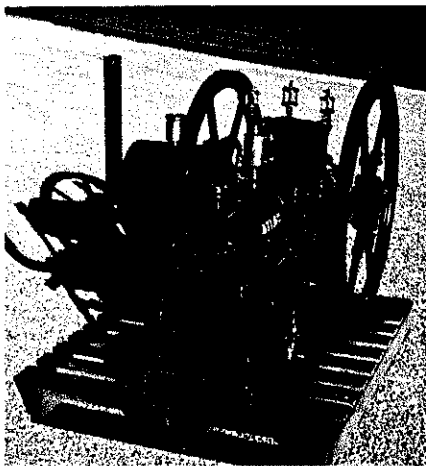


The Atlas Engine News

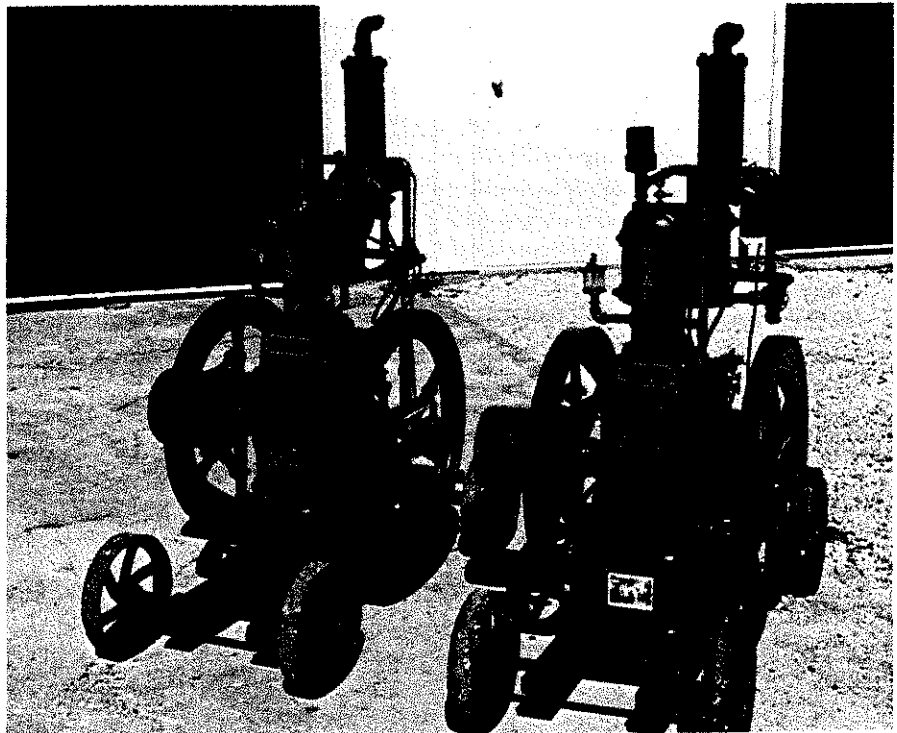
by Glenn Karch
20601 Old State Road
Haubstadt, Indiana 47639

The Hercules Engine News has been interrupted to bring you a story about another Indiana gas engine company. The Atlas Engine Works of Indianapolis, USA began manufacturing industrial and commercial steam engines and boilers back in the 1870s. Toward the end of the century they, like many others, entered into the gas engine business. Design work was being done on gas engines in 1897 and by early 1898 patterns were being made with gas engine production beginning later that year.

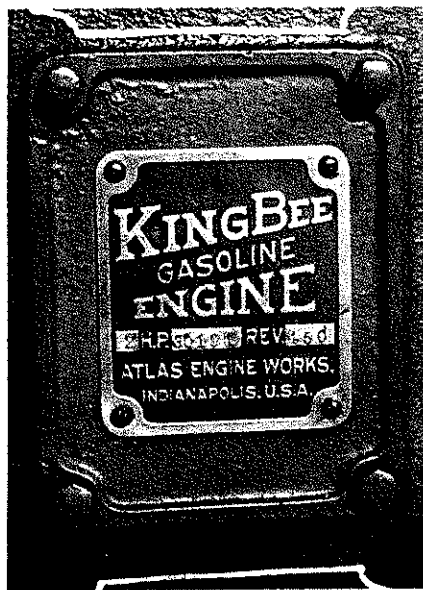
History regarding Atlas gas engine production is scarce. There is some information in the Indiana Historical Library, but is related to steam only. A full-page ad in the June 1906 McClure's Magazine shows an Atlas horizontal gas engine. The ad states that 2 to 5 HP vertical engines were available, along with 6 to 24 HP in the horizontal style. The ad further states, "Simplest, Cheapest, Safest of All." The engines are also said to be, "Most Economical, Simplest of Its Kind, Ready to Run, Needs No Attention, Starts Without 'Cranking,' Absolute Safety, Reliable and Durable and Completely Guaranteed."



Atlas "King Bee" horizontal #29771.



Right, Atlas #27981; left, King Bee #30191.



An eight page sales brochure dated May 1, 1907, illustrates the same horizontal engine and goes on to illustrate and describe the various features. An interesting feature is the long sweeping exhaust elbow, which is said to reduce back pressure, reduce fuel use and increase the power output. This brochure, however, only lists 2 and 3 HP verticals and 4 to 24 HP horizontals. Another item of interest on the horizontal style is the split hub double keyed flywheels.

An oddity is the igniter trip, which pulls on the igniter finger on the back stroke of the side rod. Shown here is a 4 HP horizontal Atlas "King Bee." It is engine number 29771.

Also shown here is a pair of 2 HP vertical Atlas engines and their respective nameplates. The one on the left is the newer of the two, having been produced in 1907 or later. Its tag reads: "King Bee Gasoline Engine, 2 HP at 450 REV, serial number 30191, Atlas En-

gine Works, Indianapolis, USA." The one on the right was likely produced about 1900. Its tag reads: "Atlas Gasoline Engine, 2 HP at 450 REV, serial number 27981, Atlas Engine Works, Indianapolis, USA." Evidence indicates that Atlas numbered their engines in sequence regardless of whether steam or gasoline. The engines shown here are the only two verticals made at Indianapolis that are currently known. They both have had flywheel hub repairs, which indicated what may have been a

severe weakness. These engines have a January 8, 1898 pattern date on the back side of the crankcase cover casting.

What is the significance of the King Bee? The last line in the last paragraph of the brochure states, "Where a self contained engine is wanted, we can furnish the 'King Bee' which is identical in every respect with engines illustrated and described in this bulletin with exception of having the gasoline tank in the base of engine."

Sometime in 1907, the company went into receivership. By 1912 the parts and patterns had been moved to San Antonio, Texas, and production of Kruger-Atlas engines had begun. Except for the name change, the engines initially remained the same. Later there were some modifications, and eventually a hopper cooled Atlas Junior line was produced. There are more of the San Antonio Kruger-Atlas brand currently known than there are of the Atlas brand. ○