HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

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Buckeye Manufacturing Company
Anderson
Madison County
Indiana

Photographs and
Written and Historical data
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Historic American Engineering Record
National Park Service
Department of Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

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HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

Buckeye Manufacturing Company

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Location:	Anderson, Indiana UTM: 16.613590.4439280 Quad: Anderson South
Date of Construction:	1904
Present Owner:	Pierce Governor Company
Significance:	Of the several automobile manufacturers established in Anderson, Indiana at the turn of the century, the Buckeye Manufacturing Company was the most successful. Initially a manufacturer of buggy and harness equipment, under the influence of John W. Lambert's inventive genius, the company began to produce gasoline engines and automobiles.
Historians:	Donald Sackheim Robert Rosenberg

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Of the several companies which produced automobiles in Anderson, Indiana at the turn of the century, the Buckeye Manufacturing Company was the most successful. Starting as a manufacturer of buggy and harness equipment, it moved into manufacture of gasoline engines and later began production of automobiles. Its principal automobile, the Lambert, was known for its "friction drive", a form of transmission which used friction plates in place of gears. The factory buildings were representative of the era; they were simple in design and reflected the manufacturing requirements of an automobile factory before the advent of the assembly line.

Business History of the Buckeye Firm

The Buckeye Manufacturing Company evolved from the Lambert Brothers Manufacturing Company of Union City, Ohio. Established in 1884, Lambert Brothers, a family-run enterprise, manufactured hardware and supplies for carriage makers. In 1890, the name of the carriage works was changed to the Buckeye Manufacturing Company. The following year a fire swept through the plant in Union City and destroyed over $15,000 in inventory. The Lamberts quickly rebuilt their Union City enterprise after the fire, and two years later, in 1893, they reorganized and incorporated. As part of the reorganization, the Lamberts moved a portion of the carriage works to Anderson, Indiana, 40 miles southwest of Union City.

Following the transfer of the Buckeye Manufacturing Company to Anderson, the Lamberts embarked on a new enterprise: the Lambert Gas and Gasoline Engine Company, founded in 1893. It joined the Buckeye Company and the Pioneer Pole and Shaft Company--a Lambert-owned firm which manufactured the poles for buggy harnesses--in a single factory in the Evalyn addition on Sycamore Street, between 3rd and 6th Streets.

John William Lambert, the inventive genius of the Lambert family, moved the Buckeye Company from the production of buggy hardware into engines and automobiles. Born in Champaign County, Ohio on 29 January 1860, he spent his youth on the family farm. He built his first automobile in 1890 and ran it in Ohio City the following year. It was a simple affair which used an internal combustion engine with a tricycle-like wheel arrangement. Though its overall appearance was more like a buggy than a modern automobile, it was one of the earliest internal combustion engine automobiles produced in the United States.[1]

A search of the patent records reveals Lambert's ingenuity and his intense interest in engines and automobiles.[2] In 1890 he received his first patents for various improvements on engines, and in 1895 he patented three complete engines. The fame of the Lambert Auto, which went into production in 1905, rested on one of his inventions. The friction drive transmission, introduced in 1907, consisted of two metal disks, perpendicular to each other, which made contact on a high line of friction.

The success of Lambert's gasoline engines prompted the construction of a new factory in mid-1904. The engine company moved from Sycamore

Street to a new plant at Ohio and Columbus Avenues in Anderson.

The new factory, of concrete and concrete block construction, was L-shaped. The long side of the L, some 500 feet long and 60 feet wide, ran parallel to the tracks of the Big Four Railroad (now the Central Indiana Railroad) which offered the factory ready access to transportation. The long side of the L was apparently a machine and building shop for manufacturing engines. The short side of the L fronted on Columbus Avenue. 148 feet long and 60 feet wide, this area housed offices and showrooms. Near the back of the long side of the L, it is believed the company erected a separate foundry for casting engine parts. Shortly after opening, this facility produced 5 to 6 engines per day.

On 19 May 1905 the Lamberts purchased a parcel of land immediately south of the Columbus Avenue plant. This acquisition made it possible to expand the plant and move the Buckeye Manufacturing Company in with the engine works. The wing fronting on Columbus Avenue was extended 58 feet to a total length of 207 feet. Perpendicular to that wing, the company built another long structure, 468 feet x 50 feet.

The Columbus Avenue structure was now roughly U-shaped, with the separate foundry located in the open end of the U. The base of the U, fronting on Columbus Avenue, was office and showroom space; the northern wing remained the domain of the engine works. The Buckeye Company used the southern wing to build Lambert automobiles.

Both companies were soon cramped for space, and by 1909 they had built more facilities in what previously had been the courtyard of the U.

In one sense, the factory on Columbus Avenue was modern: the wings were all one story and the companies had built out, rather than up.

Buckeye Manufacturing Company

Notes

1 Encyclopedia Britannica. Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., 1968, Volume 2, p. 867.
"The magazine Antique Automobile, after five years of investigation, announced its conviction that the Duryea had not been the first United States internal combustion automobile, and that this distinction should be assigned to a car built in 1890 and run in 1891 by John William Lambert of Ohio City, Ohio."

2 A partial patent search revealed the following:

YEAR	PATENT NUMBER	TITLE
1890	571448	gas engine governor
1894	517344	carburetor
1895	550832	gas engine
	536287	explosive gas engine
	534163	gas engine
1896	553033	workingman's time recorder
1897	582532	ignitor for gas engine
1890	624827	apparatus for cooling gas engin
	634242	gas engine mixing device
1900	640667	gas engine cylinder
	640688	gas engine cylinder
	643065	apparatus for cooling gas engin
	656408	gas engine governor valve
	670778 (Oct. 30)	mixer & vaporizer for gas engin
	661181	speed-regulator for gas engine
1901	689730	woodbending machine
1902	698405	speed regulator--explosive engi
1903	730930	transmission gear for autos
1904	753147	speed-controlling device for engines

Buckeye Manufacturing Company

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10 August 1904 p.5
14 March 1905 p.8
21 March 1905 p.1
2 April 1905 p.8
30 April 1905 p.2
10 May 1905 p.1
17 May 1905 p.8
24 May 1905 p.1
6 July 1905 p.1
25 July 1905 p.8
27 July 1905 p.7
6 January 1906 p.1,6
3 May 1909 p.1
16 June 1909 p.1
25 June 1909 p.1
1 October 1909 p.8
18 November 1909 p.1
11 June 1910 p.8
27 January 1911 p.8
11 March 1911 p.8

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