Guide to the Atlas Imperial Diesel Engine Company Records

NMAH.AC.0996
Sara Wheeler
2017
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Collection Overview

Repository: Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title: Atlas Imperial Diesel Engine Company Records
Identifier: NMAH.AC.0996
Date: 1917-1968 (bulk 1925-1954)
Extent: 3.2 Cubic feet (8 boxes)
Source: Work and Industry, Division of, NMAH, SI
Mechanical and Civil Engineering, Division of [former name], NMAH, SI.
Atlas Imperial Diesel Engine Company.
Language: English
Summary: The Atlas Imperial Diesel Engine Company started in 1903 by John F. Lorimer. The company produced diesel engines for a variety of machines, including marine vessels, locomotives, and farm equipment. The collection includes background and historical information on the company, instruction manuals, marketing literature, corporate records, and drawings and photographs.

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition
Collection donated by Ralph S. Lorimer.

Ownership and Custodial History
Transferred from Division of Work and Industry, 2006.

Processing Information
Processed by Sara Wheeler, intern, August 2017; supervised by Alison Oswald, archivist.

Preferred Citation

Restrictions
The collection is open for research use. Gloves must be worn when handling unprotected photographs and negatives.
Conditions Governing Use

Collection items available for reproduction, but the Archives Center makes no guarantees concerning intellectual property rights. Archives Center cost-recovery and use fees may apply when requesting reproductions. Copyright held by the Smithsonian Institution.

Biographical Note

The Atlas Imperial Diesel Engine Company was an Oakland, California, manufacturer of marine propulsion machinery. The company was founded in 1903 by John Lorimer in San Francisco, California. In 1916 it merged with Imperial Gas Engine Company. The company produced various diesel engines for a variety of uses, including marine vessels, tractors, and locomotives. In 1950, Atlas Imperial was acquired by National Supply Company, however, Atlas Diesels were manufactured up to 1957 at which point the National Supply Company sold their diesel engine division to White Motor Company and was renamed as White Diesel Engine Division.

Scope and Contents

These records include information on Atlas's products, and include trade literature, blueprints, advertising, bulletins, specifications, catalogs, operators manuals, proposals, correspondence, photographs, and historical articles on the company and on engines.

Arrangement

This collection is arranged into five series.

Series 2: User Instructions and Manuals, circa 1920-19522
Series 3: Marketing Literature, circa 1918-1954
Series 4: Corporate Records, circa 1921-1968
Series 5: Drawings and Photographs, circa 1920-1959

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:
- Diesel engines
- Engines
- Heavy machinery
- Marine engines
- Mechanical engineering
Propulsion systems
Steam-engines

Types of Materials:
Advertisements
Blueprints
Correspondence -- 20th century
Instructional materials
Leaflets
Pamphlets
Photographs -- 20th century
Proposals
Specifications
Trade catalogs

Names:
Imperial Gas Engine Company.
Mechanical and Civil Engineering, Division of [former name], NMAH, SI.
Work and Industry, Division of, NMAH, SI
## Container Listing

### Series 1: History of Atlas Imperial Diesel Engine, 1917 - 1966

Series 1 contains articles, reports, and notes about the development and history of Atlas Imperial Diesel Engine. It also contains articles related to the general history of diesel engines.

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<th>Box 1, Folder</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>1, Folder 1</td>
<td>News articles and notes, 1917 - 1951</td>
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<tr>
<td>1, Folder 2</td>
<td>General articles on diesel solid-injection for reference, 1919 - 1924</td>
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<tr>
<td>1, Folder 3</td>
<td>Draft of &quot;Location of the Atlas&quot;, circa 1959</td>
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<td>1, Folder 4</td>
<td>Notes on development, 1963 - 1966</td>
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<td>1, Folder 5</td>
<td>Diesel History by Ralph S. Lorimer, 1965</td>
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<td>1, Folder 5A</td>
<td>History of the Atlas Imperial Diesel Engine by Ralph S. Lorimer, 1958 - 1967</td>
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<td>1, Folder 6</td>
<td>Photographs of John W. Lorimer and Ralph S. Lorimer, undated</td>
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<td>1, Folder 7</td>
<td>Background on diesel oil and injection systems, undated</td>
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<tr>
<td>1, Folder 8</td>
<td>Development of diesel engines, undated</td>
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<td>1, Folder 9</td>
<td>Background of various engines, undated</td>
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Series 2: User Instructions and Manuals, 1920 - 1952

Series 2 contains instruction manuals and operating instructions for various engine models.

Box 1, Folder 10  Operator's instructions, circa 1920-1930

Box 2, Folder 1  Instruction manual for model DB, circa 1928

Box 2, Folder 2  Instruction books for four-cycle mechanical injection diesel engines, circa 1928-1930

Box 2, Folder 3  Instruction manual for stationary diesel engines, type PTD, 1942

Box 2, Folder 4  Operator's manual for TC 54 and TC 1386, circa 1946-1947

Box 2, Folder 5  Instruction manual for stationary diesel engines, types PTD-PTDS, 1947

Box 2, Folder 6  Lubrication instruction manual, 1948

Box 3, Folder 1  Instruction manual for White Diesel Engine Division, circa 1952

Box 3, Folder 2  Instruction manual for main propulsion engine, 1952

Box 3, Folder 3  Instruction manual including care, operation, and parts information, 1952

Box 4, Folder 1  Fuel injection systems maintenance manual, undated

Box 4, Folder 2  Operator's instruction book for 4M and 18(S), undated

Box 4, Folder 3  Instructions for engines 6 1/2 x 8 1/2, 7 1/2-8-10 1/2, 9 x 12, undated

Box 4, Folder 4  Operating instructions, undated

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Series 3: Marketing Literature, 1918 - 1954

Series 3 contains pamphlets, leaflets, brochures, catalogues, and bulletins about the products offered by Atlas Imperial Diesel Engine Company. It also includes price lists, published product guides, and specification sheets for customers.

Box 4, Folder 5  News articles and brochures, 1918 - 1922
Box 4, Folder 6  Mechanical injection engine guide book, 1922
Box 4, Folder 7  Pocket catalogues, 1925
Box 4, Folder 8  Bulletin leaflets about individual models, circa 1926-1934
Box 4, Folder 9  Pocket catalogue, 1928
Box 4, Folder 10  Mechanical injection four-cycle engines product information, 1928 - 1932
Box 4, Folder 11  New releases and bulletins, circa 1930-1935
Box 5, Folder 1  Brochures on full diesel engines, 1930
Box 5, Folder 2  Marine diesel engine brochure, 1932
Box 5, Folder 3  Price list, 1939
Box 5, Folder 4  Lorimer Division product guides and specifications, circa 1948
Box 5, Folder 5  Photo catalog of parts, circa 1950
Box 5, Folder 6  Parts catalog for reference use only, circa 1951
Box 5, Folder 7  National Supply Company bulletins, 1952 - 1954
Box 5, Folder 8  Stationary engines product guides, undated
Box 5, Folder 9  Marine engines brochures, undated
Box 5, Folder 10  Brochures for various engines, undated
Box 5, Folder 11  Specifications and dimensions for 6 cylinder mechanical injection diesel engine, undated
Box 5, Folder 12  Parts catalog for reference use, undated
Box 5, Folder 13  Descriptive leaflets, undated
Box 5, Folder 14  Specification sheets for various engines, undated

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Series 4: Corporate Records, 1921 - 1968

Series 4 contains correspondence related to the general business of Atlas Imperial Diesel Engine Company, along with proposals, agreements, performance reports, and bibliography records and notes.

- Box 6, Folder 1: Alteration record for engine number 8002, 1921 August
- Box 6, Folder 2: Correspondence with price lists and specifications sent to customers, 1934
- Box 6, Folder 3: G. Cellla proposals and agreements, 1936
- Box 6, Folder 4: Vulcan Rail proposals and agreements, 1936 - 1937
- Box 6, Folder 5: Patent records and warranty records, 1936 - 1955
- Box 6, Folder 6: Report to the shareholders, 1945 November
- Box 6, Folder 7: Report on the type and performance tests with Navy Bureau of Ships specifications, 1952
- Box 6, Folder 8: Department of Defense installations, 1963
- Box 6, Folder 9: Correspondence and photos, 1965 - 1968
- Box 6, Folder 10: Correspondence, 1966 - 1967
- Box 8, Folder 1: Correspondence with related notes, 1966 - 1967
- Box 8, Folder 2: Bibliography records and notes, undated

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Series 5: Drawings and Photographs, 1920 - 1959

Series 4 contains photographs of various types of engines, technical drawings, and photographs of marine vessels and farm equipment using Atlas Imperial’s engines.

Box 7, Folder 1  Photo of a Caterpillar with first diesel engine fully designed for tractor use, circa 1927-1928

Box 7, Folder 2  Photo of a Caterpillar with first diesel engine fully designed for tractor use, circa 1927-1928

Box 8, Folder 3  Photographs of marine vessels with Atlas engines, circa 1920-1930

Box 8, Folder 4  Diagrams and images of parts, circa 1921-1930

Box 8, Folder 5  Photographs of various engines, 1922 - 1928

Box 8, Folder 6  Negatives of engines, 1922 - 1958

Box 8, Folder 7  Photographs of various engines, 1922 - 1958

Box 8, Folder 8  Reversible type of marine diesel engine drawing, 1925

Box 8, Folder 9  Photographs of the first tractor powered by an Atlas engine, 1928

Box 8, Folder 10  Diesel engine technical drawings, 1929 - 1930

Box 8, Folder 11  USNM Atlas diesel at time of shipment from Chris Lauritzen, 1959 April

Box 8, Folder 12  Slides of Plymouth locomotive with Atlas, undated

Box 8, Folder 13  Performance diagram of diesel hydraulic locomotive, undated

Box 8, Folder 14  Photographs of engines, undated

Box 8, Folder 15  Photographs of Superior Engines, undated

Box 8, Folder 16  Technical drawings of various engines, undated

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