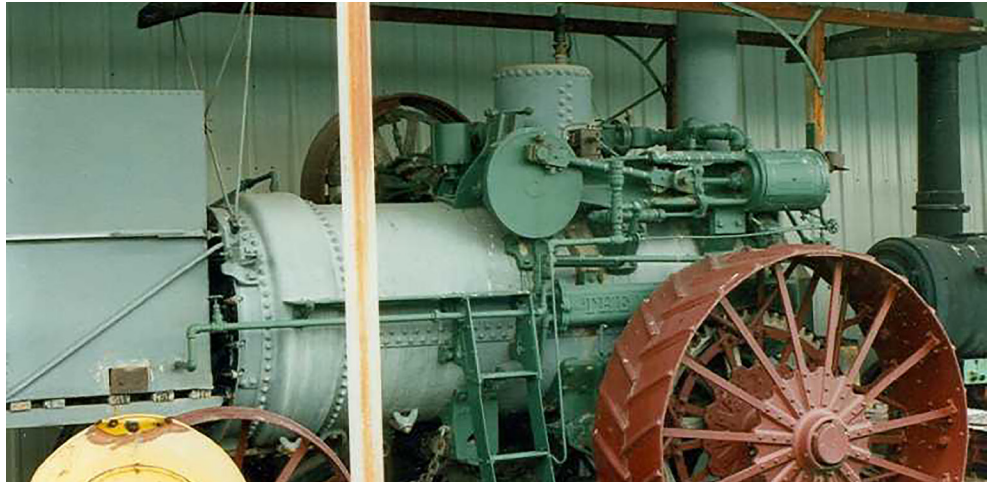


Huber Steam Engine

Marion, OH 1878-1915



Edwin Huber was a blacksmith living in Indiana when he developed a revolving hay rake. This rake, made of wood, was drawn by horses across a field of cut hay and would gather the hay into the revolving mechanism until it was full, then the hay was dumped into a pile that would later be pitched into a wagon. In 1863, at the age of 26, Huber was granted a patent for this machine. It was the first of the more than 100 patents he received in his lifetime.

Huber discovered ash and hickory were the best woods to use in the manufacture of his hay rake. His brother-in-law told him these trees grew in abundance in and around the little town of Marion, Ohio, so he moved his operation to Marion in 1865.

Edwin Huber organized the Huber Manufacturing Company 1874 as a result of outgrowing an earlier partnership. Financiers were so impressed with Huber's business success that he had no trouble obtaining financial backing for expansion. In 1875, he incorporated his company with a capital stock of \$75,000. The company began production in 1877 with a portable steam engine and by 1878 was producing steam-traction engines.

Huber built wood- and coal-fired engines for the Midwest and straw-fired engines for work in the prairie states. These steam engines ranging in size from 5 horsepower portable units up to 30 horsepower steam-traction engines. An important feature and patent of Huber's

was a return flue boiler, which returned the heat back through the boiler. He claimed gave him a 40-percent increase in fuel efficiency compared to the straight flue.

Around 1893, the Huber Company began international sales. At one point in the history of the company, Huber became America's largest manufacturer and exporter of farm machinery. Eventually, Huber entered the heavy-construction- equipment market by pioneering the use of weighted rollers on his steam engines, thereby meeting the needs of modern road-leveling and grading.

The company was eventually combined with Bucyrus-based WARCO Industries to form the Huber-WARCO Corporation of America. was ultimately taken over by Dresser Industries, who closed the production facilities in Marion. Huber, a division of Enterprise Fabrications, Inc., then operated out of Iberia, Ohio, until 2009 when they were closed after a hostile takeover by Louisiana Crane Company.

Huber always used high-quality materials and good workmanship in manufacturing his equipment. In addition, he maintained integrity and honesty in his business dealings, and he had a special affection for his workers. Knowing his employees needed homes but could not have them without a money source, he founded Marion's first Building and Loan Company. He held a picnic each year for the enjoyment of his employees and

their families, a tradition which continues during the Marion County Fair each year. He was so well-liked that at his death 5,000 people attended his funeral. This was about a third of Marion's population at the time.

Edward Huber was a man with a generous nature and he financially supported many of the progressive ventures in Marion, leading the city into the industrial revolution. He was instrumental in the building of the Marion Electric Company, the Marion Street Railway, the Marion Oil Company, the Marion Tool Works, and the Prendergast Lumber Company. As stated earlier, he founded the Marion Building and Loan Company and the Marion Malleable Iron Company. He was president of the National Bank and of the Marion Implement Company. He founded Marion's first public lending library and established Marion's Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA). Of all these accomplishments, he is probably the most famous for incorporating the Marion Steam Shovel Company in 1884, which manufactured the steam shovels that made the building of the Panama Canal possible.

For his life's work – dedicated to the betterment of farming – Edward Huber was admitted to the Agricultural Hall of Fame in 1990. Prior to that, he was admitted to the Senior Citizens Hall of Fame in 1987.