

HOBBY HISTORY

Atlas Match Corp.

by Mike Prero

Although not one of the great giants of yesteryear, such as a Diamond or Ohio, Atlas Match Corp. is of special interest to collectors today because it is one of only three domestic manufacturers left in the country [*the other two being Diamond and D.D. Bean & Sons*].

First, to rule out any confusion, it should be noted that there have been three different manufacturers with the name of Atlas. The first two (Atlas Match Co., 1900-1906?, and Atlas Match Co., 1932-1937) were both New Jersey-based companies and have no relationship to the third and latest Atlas, which appeared in Texas, in 1960.

The company was founded by Robert Alberts, Charles Williams, and Jerome Bamberger, all former employees of Universal. Beginning in specialty advertising in 1960, Atlas grew to a \$10 million operation by 1993. It was sold to A.H. Belo Corp. of Texas (the oldest continuously operated company in Texas...founded in 1842) in 1971. In 1981, it was sold to Atlas employees; the company then merged with Diamond in 1987. As of that date, Atlas/Diamond manufactured all boxes made in the US, whatever the manumark.

Atlas was sold to Bradley Industries in September, 1994, although the sale was not supposed to affect Atlas production at all. In 1998, Canada's Eddy Match Co. merged with Atlas, and in March, 1999, Eddy production moved from its Pembroke plant to the Atlas facility in Euless, Texas.

Manumark and hobby history enthusiasts will also note that Atlas controlled Republic Match Co., located in Arlington, TX, as a subsidiary.

Atlas's production center was originally in

Arlington, but is now in Euless, TX.

Trademarks include: Atlas Four-Color (1965), Flame Out (self-extinguishing, ?), Lenticular (1974), Fragrance "lites" (insense matches), Atlas 45 (or Super 45) (1980), Lincote (Jute-type) (?), Carnival Board (?).

Atlas also issued the first lenticular in 1974, the first 45-stick in 1980, and had already introduced its own Filigree-type in 1970.

Notable issues from Atlas in the last several years include some flops and some successes. Notable flops were the new (and very attractive) 'multi-faceted' Foilite-type covers and the Classic Collectible Souvenir line. Why the former wasn't followed through with is unknown to me. Perhaps the production process costs weren't justified by the projected sales, but the covers, themselves, were certainly eye-catching! The Classic Collectible Souvenir line was a great idea, but, again, Atlas cancelled it almost as soon as collectors had even become aware of the covers.

Recent "successes" might include Atlas's Jutes. They're very nice, especially the foil-imprinted ones, but to date there haven't been many of them. The really *hot* series from Atlas is the current Camel 30-strike singles which many collectors are going to extraordinary lengths to locate and obtain, over 1,600 so far, as I understand.