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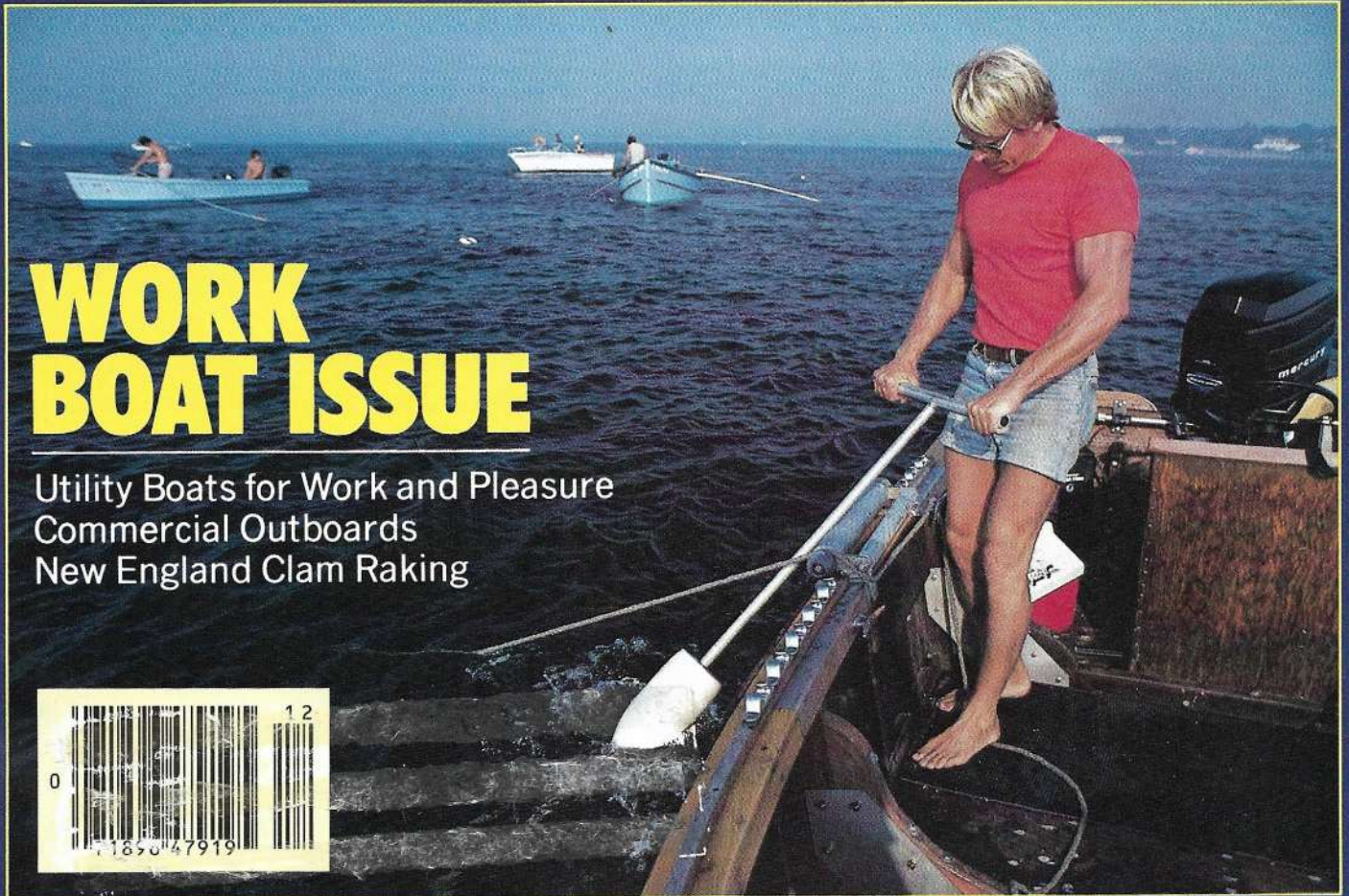
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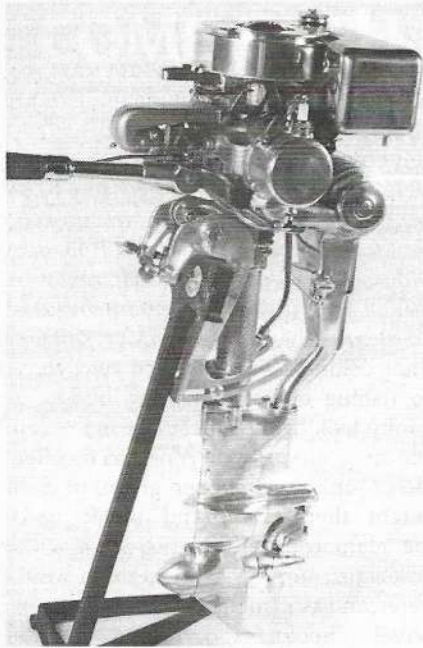


WORK BOAT ISSUE

Utility Boats for Work and Pleasure
Commercial Outboards
New England Clam Raking



ANTIQUE CORNER



PHOTOS BY ANN-MARIE CARPENTER

1930 Indian Silver Arrow

BY LAWRENCE CARPENTER

"From the wigwam of many Indian motors—comes a new outboard!" These were the opening words of a four-page

ad that appeared in boating magazines late in 1929. The world-famous Indian Motorcycle Co. (the word "motorcycle" was their registered trademark) had chosen to enter the outboard field, and the Silver Arrow was the first model of a formidable line of outboard motors. Or so everyone assumed. Three other separate single-page ads heralded the engine's speed, stamina and power, and this new class B, 20-cubic-inch outboard delivered all that was promised.

Although it possessed more than a passing resemblance to the Hartford Sturdytwin, a limited production outboard built during 1928 and early 1929 by the Gray & Prior Machine Co. of Hartford, Connecticut, the Indian Silver Arrow was obviously a totally redesigned machine. It received the benefit of Indian's engineering skills acquired during its 27 years of motor building experience. Indeed, at that time the Indian name was legendary. Not many new products seem to have had such assurance of success as did the Silver Arrow.

Few today realize the power and prestige enjoyed by the Indian name for over 50 years. Its influence was so strong



that after the last true Indian motorcycle rolled out of the Springfield, Massachusetts facility in the early 50s, the name, in its familiar script form, appeared on a succession of lesser motorcycles. A few years ago I recall seeing the word Indian emblazoned on the tank of a horrid little dirt bike of diminutive size and questionable quality.

The history of the Indian began about the turn of the century. The first prototype took form in 1901 and was little more than a powered bicycle. The popularity of the bicycle had grown tremendously during the late 1800s, and this motorized version was the combined effort of George Hendee, a well-known rider of that period from Boston, and Oscar Hedstrom, a Swedish gentleman

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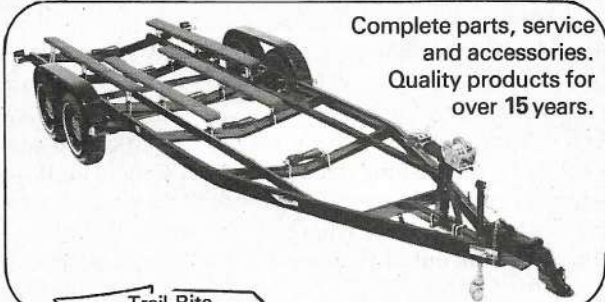
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possessing considerable mechanical skill. The first production Indians appeared in 1902, and in a few short years their numbers grew until the company was the world's largest producer of motor-cycles.

Indians were exported almost from the first, and much of their initial racing success was against European machines where the Indian's rugged dependability proved superior to the more tender nature of their European counterparts.

By 1920 both Hedstrom and Hendee had chosen the path of early retirement, having each made a great deal of money. Shortly thereafter it was evident to insiders that the company was beginning to suffer from a single-mindedness of direction and management. Although Indian continued to build motorcycles of championship caliber for many years thereafter, the firm's excursions into others fields drained capital at critical times. Though its venture into the outboard market in the form of the Silver Arrow might well have been a success had it happened a bit earlier, the timing was bad, at least for the Silver Arrow. But then 1930 proved to be a bad year for everyone. The stockmarket crash in 1929 and the resulting economic depres-

sion put a large dent in the nation's business footing.

Production of the Silver Arrow ceased after approximately 1500 of these outboards were built. Although it was a fine outboard motor, its success was further hampered by the fact that it was marketed through existing Indian Motorcycle dealerships, the majority of which had little outboard experience. Furthermore it was a model by itself with no larger or smaller brothers to fill the need of the outboard customer of this period who didn't want an engine in the Silver Arrow class. The general hard times during these years can be illustrated by what may have been the most successful dealer in the Indian outboards. The Crandall-Hicks Co. of Boston was an Indian Motorcycle dealer as well as a dealer of Johnson outboards. They stated early in 1933 in a letter to Phillip Brooke of Spokane, Washington, a prospective customer, that they had sold over 300 Silver Arrows and would be glad to supply him with the same for the price of \$185. That, incidentally, was the initial introductory price three years earlier. I have heard of Indian dealerships that still had a new Silver Arrow or two as late as 1940 with an even lower price tag.

Although actual production was very short-lived during 1929-30, there are two variations of the Silver Arrow. The engine pictured here, a recent restoration, is of the earlier type, featuring a cast aluminum gas tank secured to each cylinder with an aluminum strap. About a third of the way through production this tank was replaced with a lighter, pressed aluminum model of slightly more capacity. The securing straps were dropped. The cast model had an aluminum plate with raised, paint-filled letters that said Indian Silver Arrow—red letters, blue background. The later tank had a decal with a green background and starting and oiling instructions on the tank sides. Also added were two protrusions from the cast muffler to support the engine in a prone position and protect the more fragile tank.

Indian Silver Arrows are not as rare as they were thought to be even a few years ago. Many more have surfaced in the Northeast near where they were built. This particular engine is the fourth or fifth I have owned. The Indian is a powerful outboard for its size, and one in top tune can keep up with a Mercury Mark 20, a superb outboard of the same

Continued on page 46

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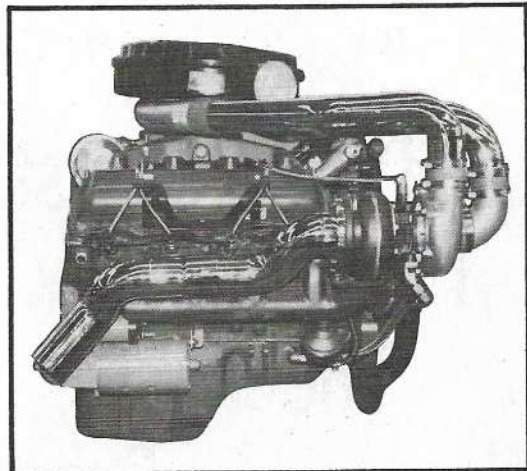
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ANTIQUE CORNER *Continued*

displacement, but 25 years newer. One potential weak point of this engine stemmed from the fact that the Silver Arrow was the first outboard to feature cast iron liners with aluminum cylinders. I have seen more than one case where these liners pulled free and broke, producing disastrous results within the engine. Also, the Indian was a relatively short stroke engine and required top compression to perform to its fullest. Most existing Silver Arrows need help in this area. This outboard was very lightweight for its vintage and power. Construction was almost entirely out of aluminum including most external bolts and screws. The final words of that first four-page ad said, "Cash in on Indian's world-wide prestige...." Unfortunately even this could not save the Silver Arrow.

As a child I was brought up in the true Indian tradition. We were a motorcycling family when motorcycles were not nearly as universally popular as they are today. In the mid-Forties I think there were perhaps a couple dozen in our town of 15,000. Dad put nearly 1,000,000 miles on Indian motorcycles over the years going back to the early Teens and later proceeding through many years on the New Hampshire police. There was no other motorcycle except an Indian as far as Dad was concerned, and I recall many happy miles during the war astraddle the gas tank of Dad's Bonneville Chief, safely nestled between his arms and his huge gauntlet gloves. Mother was invariably on the back of the buddy seat. There was of course another major American motorcycle manufacturer, but the name was seldom spoken. Actually Harley-Davidson had built more motorcycles at the time of Indian's demise, but then they had never gotten into the marine field. Dad would have disagreed, however. He always said that a Harley would make a good anchor for a boat. ♣

SPECIFICATIONS

Powerhead	Twin cylinder opposed, two cycle, 3 port type
Bore & Stroke	2½" x 2"
Cubic Inches	19.36
Horsepower	Not rated, but 14-16 seems reasonable
Peak RPM	4600
Throttle Control	Motorcycle twist grip
Weight	67 lbs.
Cost	\$185.00



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