

Hercules Engine News

*including Economy,
ARCO, Jaeger & Thermoil*

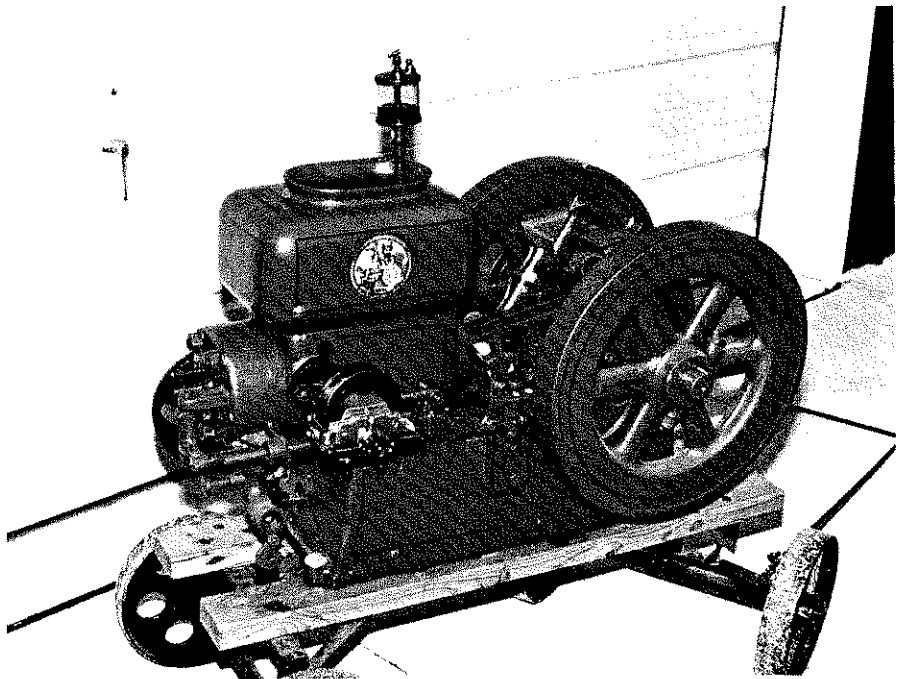
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With the advent of the E model era later in 1914, the Hercules and Economy lines would gain their own identity. A typical Hercules engine was normally dark green in color similar to the present Rustoleum hunter green. A few early ones were black, and during WWI olive drab color was used on those produced for the military. For the most part, stripes were red; however, gold and other colors were used on special order.

Compared to the Economy, the Hercules had more rounded hopper corners and an oval hopper opening with a flared lip as illustrated (top photo). The Hercules engines were all equipped with a crankshaft guard. The very early ones had a sheet metal guard, but that was soon replaced by the typical cast iron fender type guard. The only exception to the crank guard was on the engines equipped with a direct attached gear drive pumpjack.

The Hercules has a round decal on either side of the hopper. It depicted Hercules, the Greek god of strength, reaching in with his bare hands to stop the rotating crankshaft. There were two slight variations of that logo. Across the top of the decal, it read "HERCULES GAS ENGINE COMPANY" and across the bottom "Evansville, Indiana." The Economy engines had square hopper corners and a rectangular hopper opening with about a 1/4" lip. The color was dark red such as IHC red and the stripes were black. The decals were of the slanting Economy type. Currently, only two sizes are being reproduced; however, it appears that more sizes were actually used. On the 1 1/2 HP size two different hopper striping patterns were used depending on the decal size as illustrated.

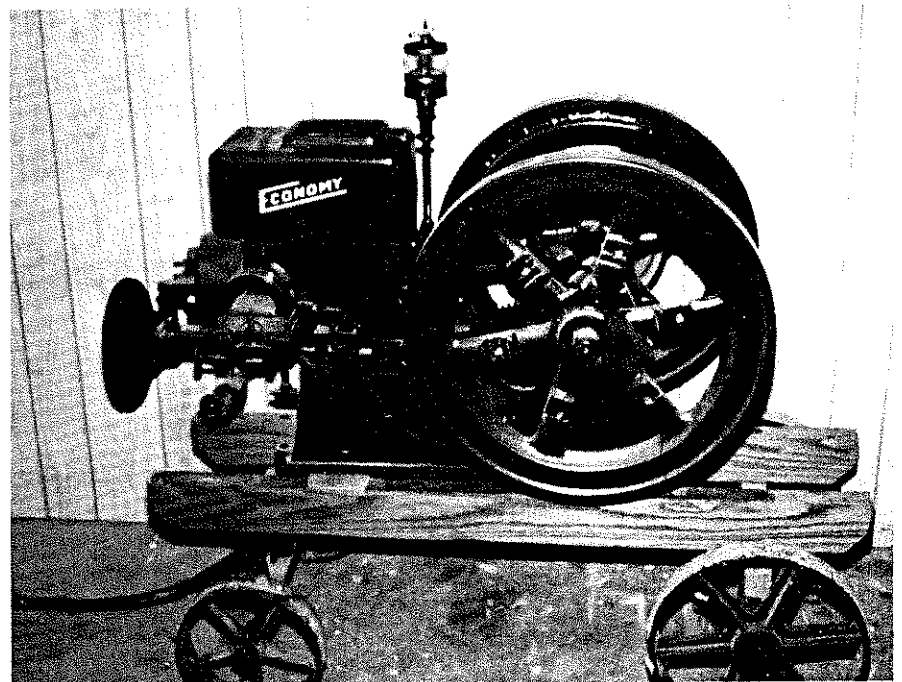
Somewhat unique in the gas engine



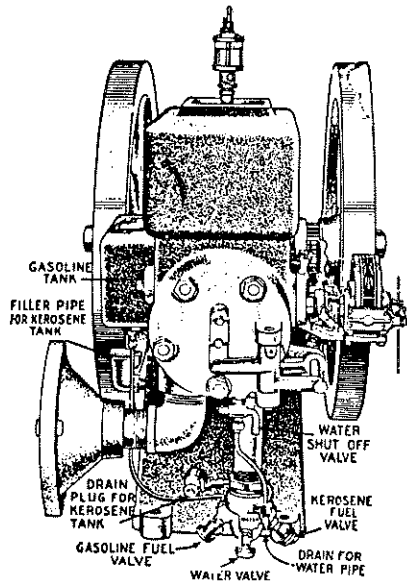
industry were the Hercules and Economy hit and miss kerosene engines. They were offered in the larger sizes in 1914 and 1915. A small cast iron gravity type gasoline tank was mounted on the off side of the engine for starting. The fuel mixer was a brass Lunkenheimer with a water and fuel adjustment valve. A three way cock was used to switch fuels. Later a three valve mixer was

used, eliminating the three way cock.

During the first half of the E model era (1914 to 1917), several other differences would emerge. Late in 1915 Hercules began offering a throttling governed kerosene engine. The hit and miss kerosene engines were discontinued in both brands. No Economy E model throttling governed engines were offered. Instead, Sears introduced its



THE KEROSENE ENGINE.



own choice of kerosene burner, the model T Thermoil made by Hercules. Early literature indicates work was being done on the Hvid (pronounced veed) type engine by Hercules as early as 1913.

Economy engines were offered with a special fuel mixer that allowed them to burn gasoline, natural gas and artificial gas. It is currently unknown whether this option was offered on Hercules brand engines or not.

From serial number data collected so far, it would appear that during the first four years production was about 60% Economy and 40% Hercules engines. During that time a few odd brand engines were also produced for jobbers and industrial suppliers.

By 1915, the Webster magneto was standard on the larger size engines. By late 1916, it was standard on all sizes.

All engines except the 1½ HP had a heavy side cast into the flywheel rim for counter balance. By 1917, that was changed to a hollowed out section instead.

The Thermoils are a story of their own. The model T Thermoils will be the next story.