

# Hercules Engine News

By Glenn Karch

## A Tale of Two Engines



This is a tale of two Economy engines that I recently bought, one of which I will add to my collection after some changes are made on it, and the other which was bought for the parts needed to make some changes on the first.

Take a look at the picture (Photo #1) of the first engine. It's a Hercules-built 1-3/4 HP

Economy Model S with a 1926 casting date on it, and I paid \$600 for it. But wait, something is wrong here, the engine has an igniter set up for a battery and coil ignition for a much older engine rather than the proper Wico EK magneto system.

Obviously, something will have to be done about that, but what? Do I spend \$350 to get the

necessary magneto and associated parts? This engine has a reproduction tag with a non-conforming serial number stamped on it, and the fuel fill spout is a reproduction. I grabbed hold of it to unscrew it so I could look it over, and when I did the tank fitting came loose leaving me with a dangling fuel spout.

Fortunately, the engine has good compression and everything else seems to be there and in working condition. These were major considerations to start with. It is on a nicely made cart but, alas, it is not of the proportions or design I prefer – on the small carts I make I have one removable handle that fits them all. I have something special in mind for this engine, which will become apparent at a later date.

Now take a look at the second engine (Photo #2), which is a 1920 Hercules-built Economy Model E that I bought for \$500. It, too, has good compression and other important parts, all of which seem quite functional. You will likely notice it

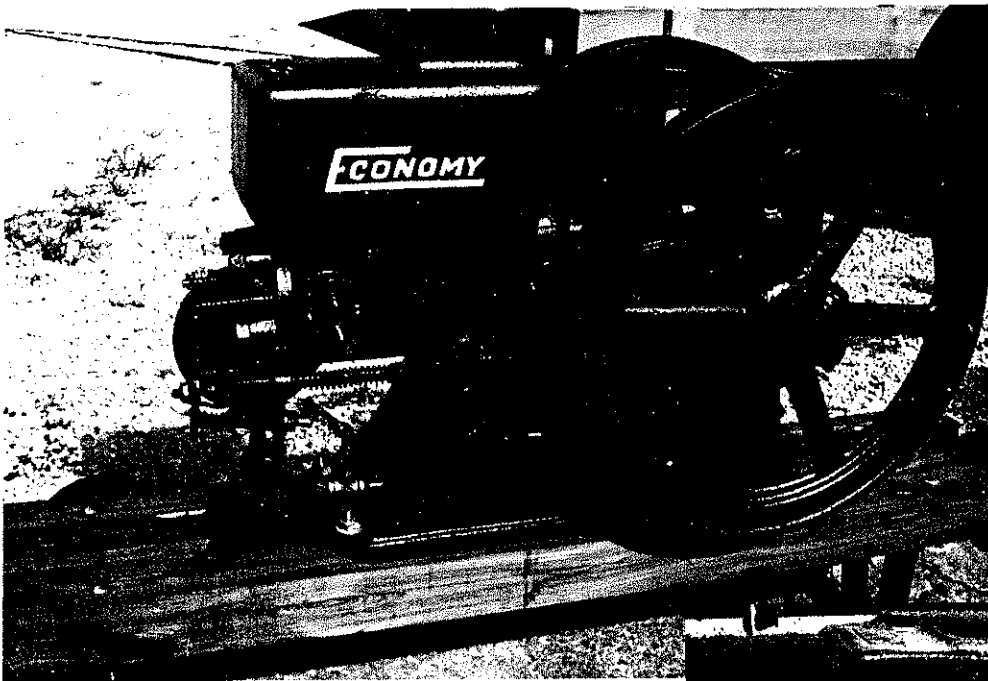


Photo #1 (above): This is the 1926 1-3/4 HP Hercules-built Economy Model S as Glenn purchased it, retrofitted with a battery and igniter ignition.

Photo #2 (right): The 1920 1-1/2 HP Hercules-built Economy Model E complete with Wico EK magneto ignition, which will eventually find its way onto the Model S.



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has a Wico EK magneto system on it. Any guesses on where the Wico system on this engine will be used? Yep, on the first engine, and the igniter system from the first engine will be transferred to this engine.

Although both engines show up in the pictures as having nice paint jobs, they will have to be redone before striping and properly applying decals. There are other details (such as proper oilers, fuel spouts and check valves) to be reckoned with, and the quality of their fuel tanks is an unknown at this time. Luckily,

all the major wear points seem to be fairly tight.

Now, I am sure that you have seen these smaller Hercules-built Economy engines for sale many times. Asking prices of \$600, \$700, \$800, \$900 – or more – for what appear to be complete and running engines are common. But it's been my experience that it often takes another \$200 or so to bring an engine back to a reasonably original state of repair, so you can see that the \$500 and \$600 engines can easily become \$700 and \$800 engines – if you are lucky and charge nothing for

your time, effort and mileage. But, hey, that's what the hobby is all about.

Next issue we should have some interesting Hercules related observations and, hopefully, pictures from the Tri-State Gas Engine and Tractor Show in Portland, Ind. We'll see you then.

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