

## Hercules Engine News

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A call came the other day from a friend in Massachusetts. There was a question about Brantford oil engines. The Brantford engines came from Brantford, Ontario. Henry P. Hoag introduced these Hvid type engines to Brantford in 1918, and they were marketed as Hoag engines. He imported them from a manufacturer in the USA. The Hoag engines were essentially identical to the Thermoil engines being manufactured for Sears, Roebuck & Company by the Hercules Gas Engine Company at Evansville, Indiana. It is believed that the Hoag was only available in the 6 HP size.

By 1920 the Brantford oil engines appeared and the Hoag brand disappeared. According to their literature, the Brantford engines were available in 1½, 3½, 7 and 9 HP. The 7 and 9 HP sizes, with minor modifications, were again essentially the same as the 6 and 8 HP model U Thermoils. The 1½ and 3½ HP sizes were essentially the same as the two Thermoil engines being built by the Cummins Engine Company of Columbus, Indiana, for Sears. Three of these engine sizes are rated at higher HP than the other model model U engines. A look at their specification table tells the story. The rpm has been raised slightly to put them in the higher HP category. These two smaller sizes were soon discontinued because Cummins had quit building them and making the parts.

It is believed that the bulk of the Brantford engine parts were imported, and the assembly and production of modified parts was done at Brantford. Much of the text and most of the illustrations in the Brantford literature are identical to that found in Thermoil literature.

The whole Hvid engine episode turned out to be a fiasco for all who obtained license to manufacture or market them. From their beginning in

1915 with modified gas engines to the redesigned U models in 1918, the Hvid engines never lived up to expectations.

Another call came from West Virginia in regard to engine number 317095. It turned out to be a 1½ HP model N gas engine built by Hercules. The model N, like the Hvid engines mentioned earlier, turned out to be even shorter lived. Production began in 1923 and by 1924 it had ceased. The 1½ HP model N was 75 pounds lighter than the standard 1½ HP size and sold for a few dollars less. It was plagued with problems from the beginning. It had a single flywheel governor weight. Apparently it was difficult to keep the stops on the weight adjusted properly. The model N also ran faster than most others at 650 rpm. The governor weight would knock the finger off the end of the detent lever and the engine would run wild. Once this happened, other parts were damaged as it began to disassemble. The particular engine mentioned had repairs made on it. On this particular engine the flywheels didn't match either. I have 48 model N's on my list now. Many of them also show evidence of past problems. For the most

part, the model N is somewhat temperamental and not a consistent runner as it clatters along. Despite all of this, the model N is a prize among Hercules and Economy owners.

A call just came from a nearby friend of mine. He had gone to an auction and bought a 2½ HP model E Economy engine for \$400. He wanted to know how you go about getting it all cleaned up and getting repair parts to fix it up. I told him to disassemble it and keep all the smaller parts at home to clean up and work on, and to take all the large parts to Redi-Strip. I like to keep the small parts at home and clean them with solvent and then run them over the wire buffing wheel. New pins can be made to take up a lot of the play between parts caused by wear over the years. That is also the time to order necessary springs and other items while waiting for the big parts at Redi-Strip. While waiting for the big parts, the rest of the engine can be cleaned, repaired and painted.

Luckily, parts and repairs for such an engine are usually relatively easy to obtain from one or more advertisers in GEM. ○