

Hercules Engine News

By Glenn Karch

Hercules Look-Alikes



At this year's engine show in Portland, Ind., Ron Heutter asked me to take a look at an engine he had, and pictured here is what he showed me.

Beginning in 1919, Hercules look-alike engines were produced by the La Fonderie De Plessisville in Plessisville, Quebec. Although very similar to Hercules engines in appearance, there were differences. They were of Hercules Model E design, but with a few Canadian inspired modifications. Ron's engine is an original "Petit Moteur Niagara 2 Chevaux-Vapeur a Gazoline Seulement," French for "little 2 HP gas engine." Several look-alike engine brands were produced up until 1925 when they all became Forano.

Ron's engine is number 3020, and it was the 58th out of 60 engines made at Plessisville in 1937. It is also the last of 11, 2 HP engines made there that year.

Niagara Brand

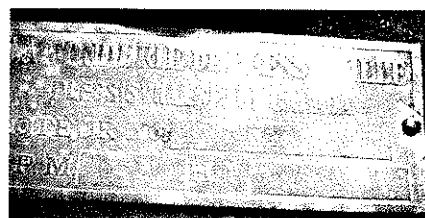
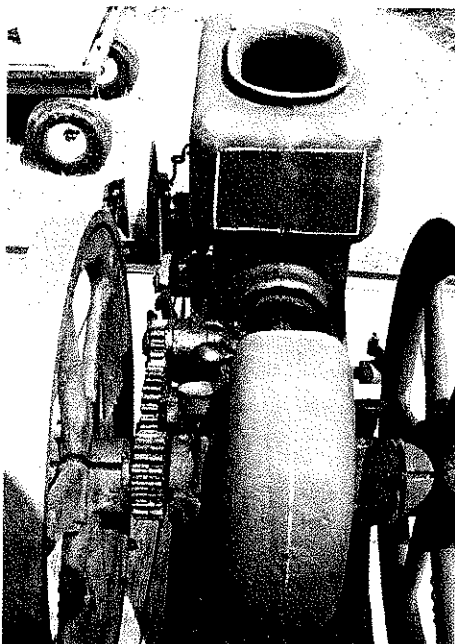
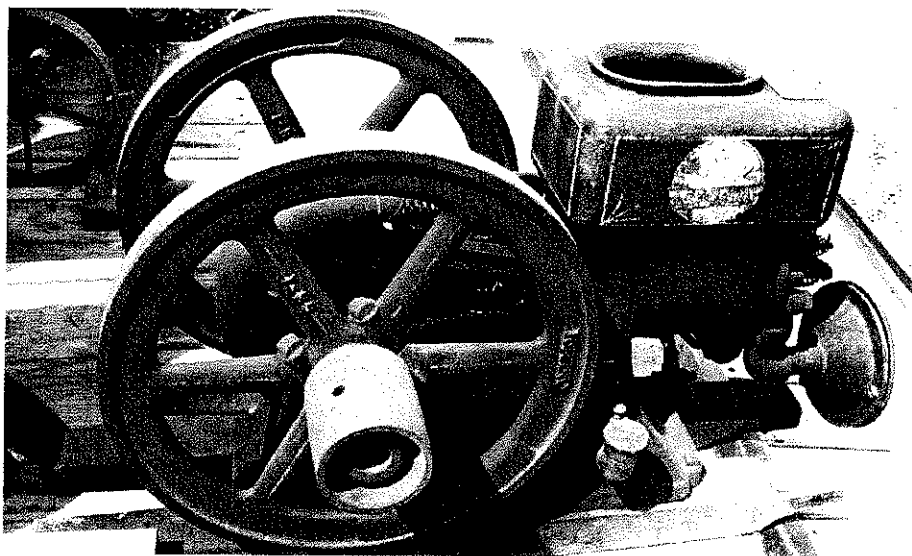
This particular engine is the Niagara brand produced for and sold by Forano. Forano was a marketer of farm and industrial equipment, and it is possible Forano may have been the owner or became the owner of the Plessisville Foundry.

Although the engine pictured looks very similar to the 1-1/2 HP Hercules Model E, there are several differences. Made in 1937, it still uses the flared lip Hercules Model E block casting that Hercules used from 1914 to 1921. The Webster magneto was always standard, but the one pictured has the MM magneto rather

than the typical M Model used on U.S. production. The aluminum magneto band rather than a brass band was also a Canadian feature.

The paint color was a dark green similar to that of the early Hercules. As can be seen in the pictures, the striping pattern was somewhat different. The Niagara

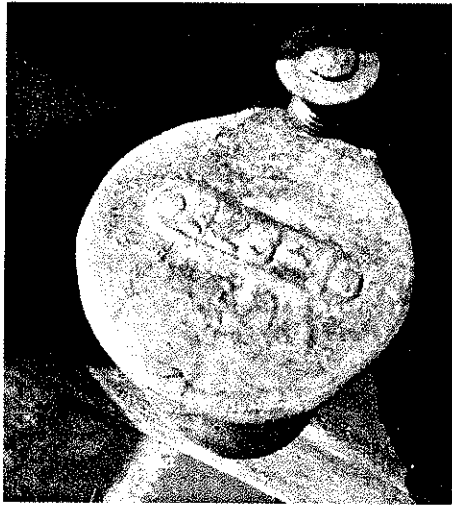
decal was used on the hopper while Forano was cast on the flywheel rims. The flywheel rim is about 1/8-inch narrower than those of the Hercules Model E, and the cross section of the whole rim is thinner making the flywheel lighter in weight. The RPM rating is 650 rather than the 550 of the Hercules Model E,



Top: What looks like a Hercules Model E is a Canadian-built Niagara sold by Forano. Made in 1937, the Niagara has two-bolt flywheels as last used on Sparta-built Economy engines in 1912.

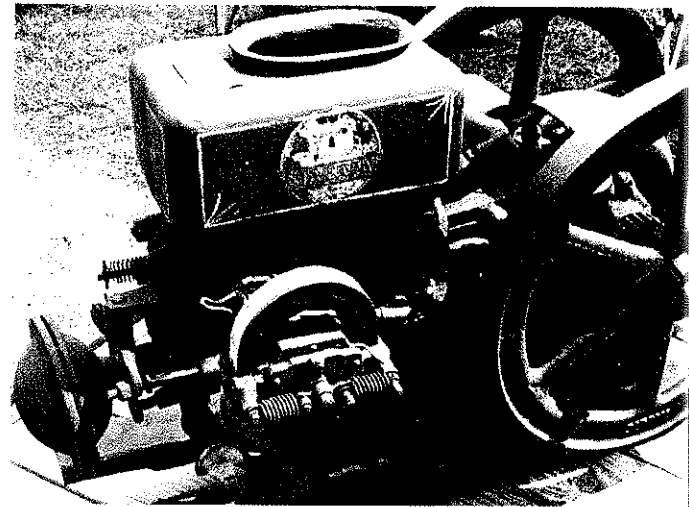
Above: Niagara's nameplate lists Plessisville Foundry as actual manufacturer.

Left: Flywheel rims are thinner and lighter than a Model E's.



Left: Fuel filler cap on the Forano is located on the off side of the engine base but has an old style spring swivel cap.

Right: Magneto on the Forano is a Webster MM, and the magneto band is aluminum, not brass as common to U.S.-spec Webster's.



thus lighter flywheels could be used. The flywheels are two-bolt, a feature not seen since the Sparta Economy days in 1912.

The early ball muffler and the early rocker arm without the reinforcing web seem to have remained as standard features,

too. The fuel filler cap, still located on the off side, is the old style with the spring swivel cap; however, the cap has a casting number of some kind on it.

Production of the 2 HP size ceased after 1942 and all production stopped in 1946. The

Forano Company is still in business producing sawmill and tree cutting machinery.

Glenn Karch is a noted authority on Hercules engines. Contact him at: 20601 Old State Road, Haubstadt, IN 47639, or e-mail: glenn.karch@gte.net

HF - 600