

Hercules Engine News

By Glenn Karch

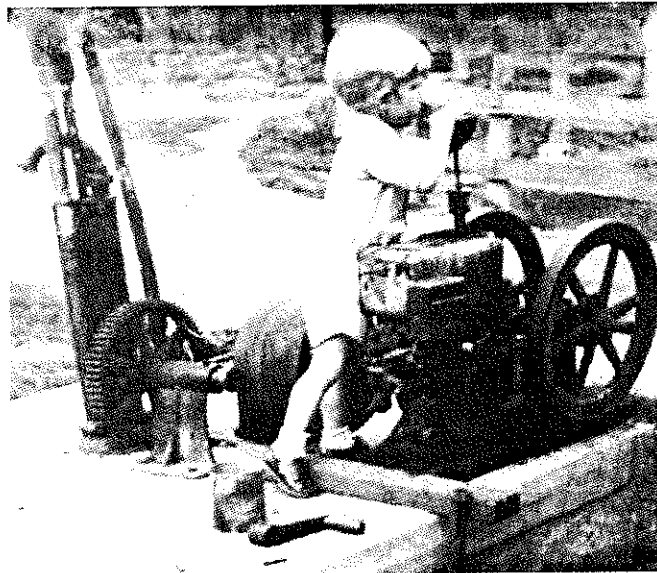
Uncle Joe's Hercules



On Sept. 14, 1925, a 1-3/4 HP Model S engine block was cast at the Hercules Corp. engine works foundry. Later that year it was made into a completed engine with serial no. 332275 on it. It was painted red and became an Economy engine, with Economy "bow tie" decals on either side of its water hopper. It was a special engine, made for a log saw outfit with a special flywheel, crankshaft and fuel mixer. Late in 1925 the Vernier brothers, Joe and George, of nearby Belleville, Ill., placed a mail order with Sears, Roebuck & Co. for the log saw outfit. At that time, the complete log saw outfit was listed at \$89.95 in the Sears catalog. Shipping would be extra.

They lived on a farm just east of Belleville on the Shiloh Road. There was a lot of timber on the farm and the log saw was used to cut trees and make props for the local coal mine. When uncle Joe

Vernier went to work in town the log saw was no longer used. The

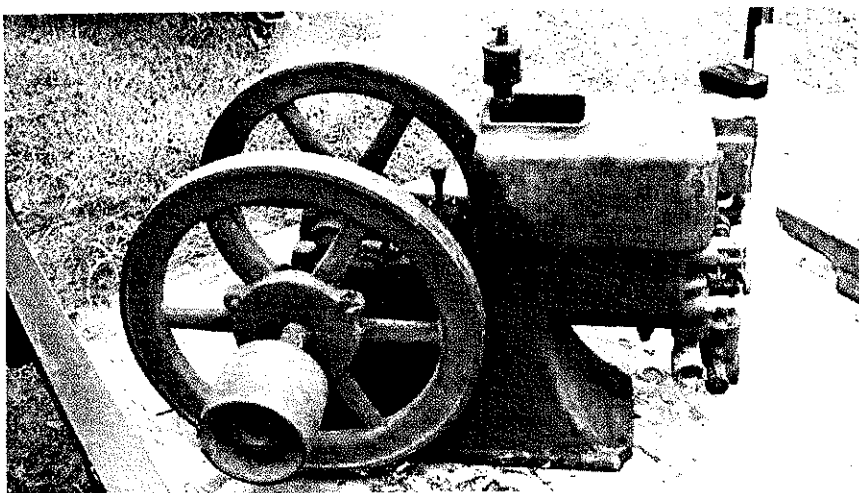


Picture #1, above: A young Francis Vernier oiling the 1-1/2 HP 1925 Model S in 1938.

Picture #2, below: The same engine, as it looks today.

engine was separated from the saw and put to work at a well running a pump jack and pump to supply water for cattle on the farm.

Picture #1, taken in 1938,



shows a small boy using an oil can to put oil into the engine cylinder oiler. Maybe he was just pretending. After many years, his mother still had the aging picture. The engine stayed on the well for a number of years until the farm was sold. Uncle Joe acquired the engines that were used on the farm and kept them for years.

The young man in the picture has long since grown up, and had often looked at the engine at his uncle's place. He tried for a long time, without success, to make a deal with uncle Joe for the engine. One day he took along the old picture, which had been enlarged and enhanced, to show to uncle Joe - and they finally made a deal.

He brought the engine back home to Evansville, Ind., in June 2003 for the Southern Indiana Antique and Machinery Club Classic Iron Show. There, for the first time in many years, he started the engine. Picture #2 shows the engine as it is today, looking much like it did 65 years ago.

Who is the proud new owner? George's son, Francis Vernier of Belleville, Ill., now 68 years young and still in possession of the picture that helped him make a deal to get the engine from his 95-year-old uncle Joe.

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