

Hercules Engine News

by Glenn Karch



Economy Decal Details

Economy engines with a bow tie decal on the side of the water hopper appeared for the first time in the fall issue of the 1921 Sears, Roebuck and Co. catalog. All we can tell from those old catalogs is that the background color of the decal was dark and the lettering was light.

It was almost 80 years ago that the last Economy engines built by Hercules for Sears catalog sales were made, and today many gas engine hobbyists are restoring these relics from the past. Naturally, owners of these engines want to recreate their engine's original appearance. There are currently two reproduction bow tie decal choices available to Economy engine owners (see Picture #1 and Picture #2), and these, as we'll see, are fine if you don't know any better.

Divining Colors

I've been trying to confirm Economy decal colors for some time, and after a great deal of study and observation I can report several discoveries that have been made. Page 88 of C.H. Wendel's *Gas Engine Trademarks* shows a copy of the bow tie Economy trademark, showing the silhouette of the "Scales of Justice" in the background as shown in Picture #3. This silhouette can be seen on some Economy engines in later Sears catalogs.

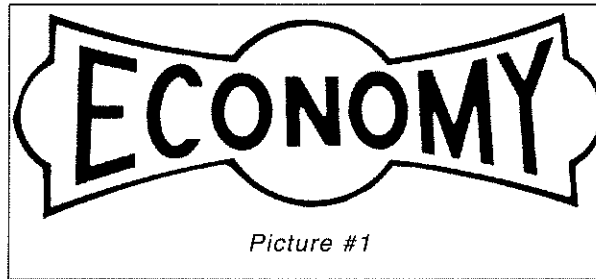
After looking at the remains of original decals

on many unrestored engines, it became apparent there was more color involved than just the yellow and black we have all become used to. Traces of green and blue can also be found, and

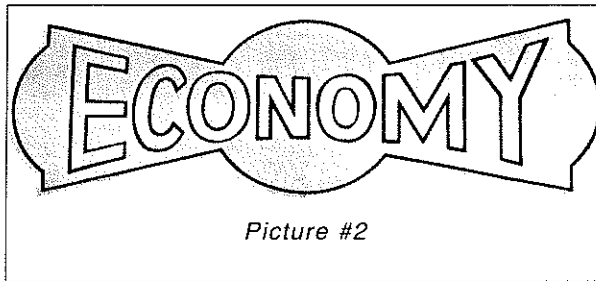
I suspect the green color was a result of the interaction of yellow and blue. Traces of gold have also been observed. Apparently, the base color used in creating the original decals was yellow, with gold, black and blue then applied in some order to make the final decal. As these original decals aged, the gold and blue gradually disappeared and the yellow and black remained. Putting this altogether, a reproduction similar to what the originals probably did look like is shown in Picture #4. This decal was created by a friend of mine who had a few made up by a professional sign shop working from hand-made sample.

Picture #5 shows a 1-3/4 HP Model S Economy engine with the original looking decal in place. Its block was cast on March 16, 1926. This is one of the engines pictured in the October 2002 GEM on page 10. It has been assigned serial number 335002.

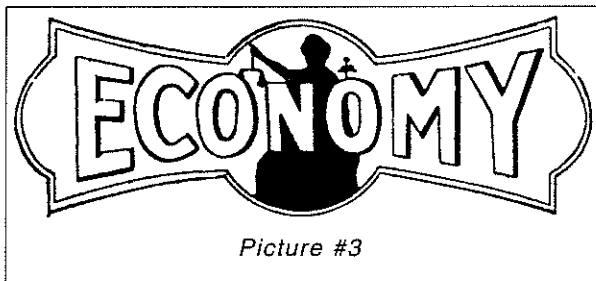
Since so many of you are accustomed to seeing the current yellow and black Economy reproductions, I am sure that a "real" reproduction may come as a bit of a surprise and look out of place. You may question it, but that's the story, folks. It is interesting to note that the decal used on the Thermoil Model U and UA also had a bow tie with black, gold and blu



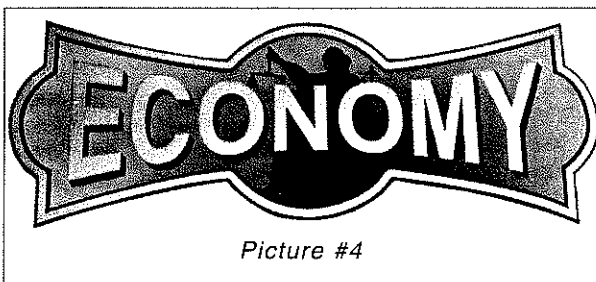
Picture #1



Picture #2



Picture #3



Picture #4

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Picture #5: Glenn Karch's 1926 Economy Model S with Glenn's interpretation of the Economy decal. Compare this with the photo that ran in the October 2002 issue of GEM on page 10. Same engine, different decal, and a very different look as a result.

colors. This was also a Sears trademark, and it is also shown on page 88 of Wendel's Gas Engine Trademarks.

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