

Hercules Engine News



By Glenn Karch

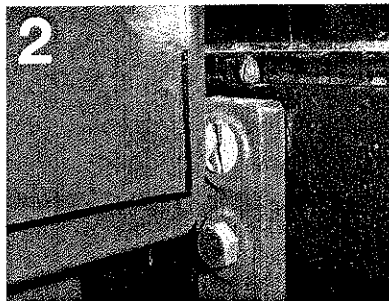
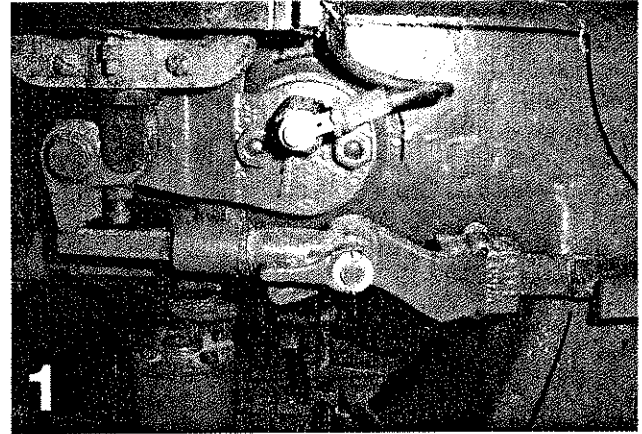
Wico Magnetos

When it comes to Hercules engines, there are sometimes more questions than there are answers. When were Wico magneto systems first used on Hercules engines? According to Jaeger engine literature, they were first fitted with the Wico EK magneto beginning on March 1st, 1923. Evidence indicates they were also used on the Arco brand engines beginning near that same time. It should be noted that all of the comments in this story pertain to the small block (3-1/4-inch bore) engines. These Jaeger and Arco engines had "FW" after the 2 HP rating on the identification tag. In the same serial number sequence, the Hercules and Economy engines continued to be either 1-1/2 HP E or F models until later in 1923.

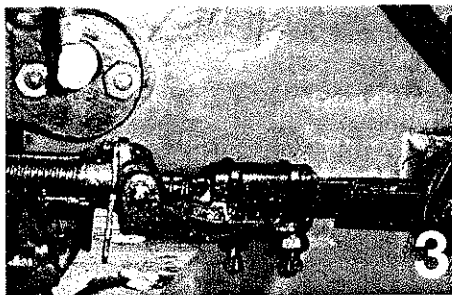
From what is known, the use of the Wico PR magneto preceded the Wico EK by perhaps a year.

On the Hercules-built engines, there was sort of an evolution after the Wico PR was introduced. Several engines, especially the Arco, have been observed with the Wico PR magneto and an early version of the Type 2 magneto drive. Perhaps it was offered as an option for the not-too-successful 1A Webster magneto system. A Type 2 magneto drive and the Wico PR magneto is shown in Photo 1 on an Economy Model E engine. It was probably a field change kit that was available from Wico.

Interestingly, the magneto bracket in Photo 2 is slightly different from the normal one we are



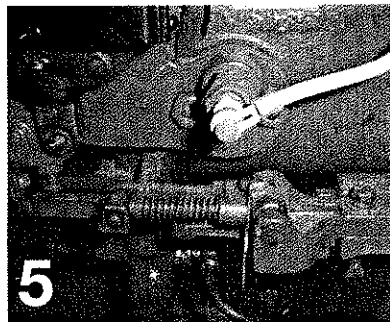
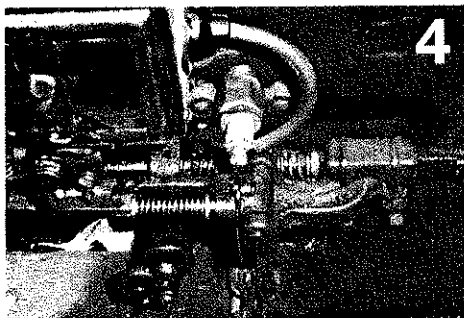
used to seeing. On the back side, the bracket is very close to the engine block and does not sit forward enough, so it required a recessed head screw in the top hole. Later the bracket was lengthened slightly so it cleared the block and a regular cap screw could be used in the top hole.



The first Wico EK magneto drive used a one-piece side rod bracket with a rather thin supporting web, as seen in Photo 3.

That bracket was prone to breakage, so, as you can see in Photo 4, a reinforcing web was added.

During the time when these two side rod brackets were used, the trip finger holder did not have the October 30, 1923 patent date on it. It also did not have the screw and clip to hold the trip finger in the holder.



Shown in Photo 5 is the more common adjustable two-piece side rod bracket and the trip holder with the patent date and retaining clip.

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