

Sparta Economy Engine News

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Before going into more detail in regard to the Economy gasoline engines built at Sparta, Michigan, by the Holm Machine Manufacturing Company, a few comments about the first Economy brand engines offered by Sears, Roebuck & Co. are in order.

The first Economy brand gasoline engines were illustrated in the fall of 1908 Sears catalog. While the illustrations in that catalog and the spring 1909 catalog are somewhat generic, they have the general appearance of the Waterloo gasoline engines. These were red engines with a tag on the igniter side of the hopper stating "Economy Gasoline Engine." In the catalog it states that the engines were shipped from central Iowa. In reality, the actual engines seen now are essentially identical to the Waterloo gasoline engines of that time. They have the speed regulating device and the fuel system device that were patented by Louis M. Witry and assigned to the Waterloo Gasoline Engine Com-

pany of Waterloo, Iowa.

Shown below are excerpts from Witry's patent papers showing the speed regulating device and the fuel system. The speed regulating device consisted basically of a friction held lever that, when manually moved, varied the spring tension on the detent arm to counteract the governor springs thus allowing changes of the engine speed setting. In some instances Witry has been given credit for inventing the horizontal flyball governor with a moveable inner pin. Actually all he invented was a way to regulate governed engine speed settings. This speed regulating device was not continued on the first Sparta built Economys either because an agreement for its use could not be reached or Holm convinced Sears

that he had a better deal with his own patent for that purpose. More on that in future stories.

The right to use the Witry fuel system was apparently given or sold to Holm (Sears) to be used on the first Sparta built Economy engines.

Serial numbers on these first Economy brand engines fell into the 6,000 to 10,000 range. Apparently serial numbers of both the Waterloo brand and the Economy brand were commingled during a "year" of production. It would be my guess that the total production of the "Waterloo Economy" engines at Waterloo was around 1,000 or so engines. At the present time I know of four of these "Waterloo Economy" engines. They are located in Arkansas, Indiana, Iowa and Maryland. ○

