

Heider Model C

Carroll, IA 1914



The Heider Company got its start when two brothers, Henry and John Heider, set up shop in 1903 to manufacture a 4-horse-power evener that Henry invented. They opened a shop in Albert Lea, Minnesota, but business was so successful, a bigger shop was needed and they relocated to Carroll, Iowa, where a suitable building was found. Yoke, doubletrees, singletrees, eveners up to 6-horse-power, step ladders, and ladders were manufactured in the new plant.



In 1907, the Heider Company needed more power to operate the plant, and purchased a 25-horsepower Lambert gas engine. With this engine, Henry became interested in gas tractors. Curiosity and risk-taking often leads to innovation, and in 1911 John Heider announced his first tractor with the Heider A. With it, Heider made the friction-drive system famous as a method of power transmission. The Heider B was introduced in 1912 and while it was a success, the Model B had its problems. Henry Heider, aware of these shortcomings, was also aware of the need to partner with a major company that had the resources to address design issues. In 1914, a deal was struck with Rock Island Plow Company. That same year, the Model C was designed and put into production. The Model C proved to be a great success and orders overwhelmed the Heider Company's production facilities. Heider, facing a costly plant

expansion, received an offer from Rock Island to purchase the tractor line. After consideration, Heider accepted the offer in January of 1916 and sold the rights and patents for Heider tractors to Rock Island. Tractor production moved to Rock Island facilities in 1916, leaving Heider to continue making horse equipment and wagons. Heider remained in business as a wagon maker until 1983. At that time, the business was sold to the Wellbuilt Company.

Rock Island built the Model C for a number of years and produced the Model D, the Heider lift plow, Heider M2 and M1 tractors, and a tractor model called the 15-27 in 1925, which appears to have been an updated Model C. Henry Heider was retained by Rock Island as a designer for a number of years after Rock Island's purchase of the Heider tractor line.

The Heider Model "C" tractor was introduced in 1914, and originally rated a 10-20, but with an improved engine design in 1916 allowed it to be upgraded to a 12-20 rating. The tractor used a friction drive and had seven forward speeds and seven in reverse. It had no clutch and could change speeds on the go. During the next ten years, the Model "C" used the Waukesha four-cylinder engine with a 4½" x 6¾" bore engine. Weighing 6,000 pounds, the 12-20 tractor sold for \$1,095 in 1917 and in 1918 increased to \$1,395.

In 1916, the 12-20 Model C Heider tractor was introduced. It remained on the

market until 1924, when it was replaced with the improved 15-27 Model C. The Heider Model C, 15-27 tractor was built from 1924 through 1927. This model used a Waukesha four-cylinder engine with a 4 ¾ x 6 ¾-inch-bore-and-stroke. In Nebraska Test No. 114 of 1925, the 15-27 proved itself with over 17 drawbar horsepower and 30 horsepower on the belt pulley.

Rock Island kept the Heider name on its tractors until 1928 when it replaced the old friction drive with a more conventional clutch and geared transmission. The new machines became known as Rock Island tractors. Rock Island apparently discontinued tractor production around 1935.

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