

Thieman Tractor

Albert City, IA 1936-42



The Thieman (sometimes pronounced 'Theeman' and sometimes pronounced 'Teeman', even among the Thieman family) brothers of Albert City, Iowa, had a modern practical idea back in 1936. They decided to recycle. They manufactured kit tractors that farmers could power with engines out of old cars no longer being used.

In 1921, brothers Henry D, , Charles, and Warren Thieman and William B. Herman organized the Albert City Company to make ensilage harvesters.

Thieman Tractor sales brochure circa 1936

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They eventually produced livestock feeders and waterers, end gates, plow

guides, saw frames, and power units, as well as steel burial vaults.

The first Thieman appeared in 1936. The Thieman tractor was touted as "an all-purpose economy" tractor capable of doing what company advertising said was "the work of four to six horses at the cost of one horse or less." The Thieman Tractor cost \$185 for a tractor chassis to which the customer fitted their own engine, drive shaft, and rear axle. A complete model subsequently was offered with a Ford Model A engine for around \$500. The chassis was also available for the 1928 Chevrolet or the Dodge Four.

This style of tractor became known as "Kit" or "Conversion" tractors. The kit was originally intended to be used with a Ford Model A engine, and a later chassis was also available for the 1928 Chevrolet or the Dodge Four. The object was to cobble together pieces of used equipment to make an inexpensive tractor. These low prices were a welcome relief during the Great Depression, and sales were so brisk that in peak season the company employed 150 people working three shifts.

The idea behind the Thieman tractor was to salvage engines from used or junked automobiles, and create inexpensive farming tractors from what would otherwise be scrap. This idea was quite attractive to farmers who were struggling to make ends meet in the Depression years. The Thieman

tractors came to an abrupt end in 1942 soon after the U. S. entered World War II and there was a shortage of steel. The business was sold in 1945, and within a short time it was sold once again, finally going into bankruptcy.

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