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The Hercules Engine News

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There are always some new things to be learned in regard to gas engine history. Back in early April, while visiting a show at White Springs, Florida, I saw a 6 HP model XK Economy engine. I checked the serial number (7128), and it was an engine I had seen several years earlier at Zolfo Springs, Florida. When looking it over carefully, I noticed a casting date on the engine head. It was January 1, 1929. That's New Year's Day! Did the Hercules foundry actually work on New Year's Day? Perhaps the heat was kept up in the foundry cupolas and they were kept busy even on holidays. Maybe New Year's Day was not a holiday in 1929. Then there is also the possibility that some foundry worker misdated the casting on purpose or by mistake. Who knows the answer, but I found it unusual to find a New Year's Day casting date.

A while back I commented about some of the lesser known brands of engines produced by the Hercules Gas Engine Company at Evansville, Indiana. Since then another Saxon brand engine has turned up with the Brackett, Shaw and Lunt, Boston, Massachusetts, tag on it. It is also a 1½ HP and has serial number 234,588 on it. Again its origin was from someone in the northeast area of the USA.

Two more Phillips drag saw engines have shown up, both are 1½ HP. One has serial number 210,043 with another number, B571. The other has serial number 214,079 followed by B589. The meaning of the B numbers is currently unknown. All known Phillips serial numbers occur within a rather narrow range. It suggests to me that Phillips made a one-time contract for several hundred engines. It also suggests that Phillips went in and out of the Hercules powered saws in 1920. Were there Phillips saws powered by other engine brands? Interestingly, Hercules and Economy drag saws did not make their appearance until the latter part of 1921. Did they take over the Phillips saw business?

Here is one for you Thermoil enthu-

siasts. I have a report of a 1½ HP model T Thermoil. So far there is no verification, but if it's true, it will fill in one more missing piece of the Thermoil history puzzle.

Every now and then someone comes up with questions about an engine that has a missing data tag. Reproduction tags are available for both the Hercules built engines and the Spartas. Once the characteristics of the engine are well enough identified, it is possible to go through the list of some 3,000 known engines and pick out a number currently not known. A number then can be assigned that will be consistent with the particular engine's characteristics. There are two problems. One is that an engine may turn up with the original number that has been assigned to a missing tag engine. The odds of that are slim. The other problem is that it is very hard to find metal stamps that have the right figure design to match the originals.

A call recently came from Kansas in regard to a 5 HP engine of Hercules design with a LEVIS identification and other data indicating it to be of Canadian origin. There will be more about that later on. ○