

Hercules Engine News

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This month's column relates mostly to responses to questions that commonly come up concerning Hercules built engines.

There seems to be some confusion in regard to the tags on the Jaeger brand engines. The tag on top of the water hopper toward the front is the generic tag used on all Hercules built engines. It has only the engine serial number, the RPM and HP. Most Jaeger brand engines do not have a model letter on the tag. There is another tag (usually on the base) that is the Jaeger Machine Company tag. It was put on at the Hercules factory; however, the data on it was put on at the Jaeger factory. The data on that tag refers to the size and type of concrete mixer that the engine was part of. Sometimes there is a third tag. The one seen most often is that of the Roy C. Wayne Company. They were suppliers of many kinds of construction machinery.

Questions are asked about a "K" that is stamped on some Hercules tags. Whenever there is a "K" following the

model letter on the tag, it denotes a kerosene throttling governed engine. An example would be 3EK stamped in the HP space on the tag. The 3 is the HP, the E is the model and the K means kerosene. That all sounds simple enough. As engines age, repairs are often needed. Some enterprising people mixed, matched and traded parts with other Hercules built engines to make repairs. The result could be an engine with the "K" tag but with partial or total conversion to a hit and miss engine or some hybrid thereof.

How much is a certain Hercules built engine worth? That question is often asked. I won't pass on my opinions, but here are the results from a recent sale near Morton, Illinois. There were three such engines on the sale. All were complete, loose and in "as found" condition. A 1½ HP model E Economy brought \$550. A 1½ HP model F Hercules on a cart brought \$525. A 1½ HP model FW Hercules on a cart brought \$625. With a little tune up work, I think they could have been made to run. Did I buy any of them? No. I bought a nice 2½ HP Dempster so I would have one of the featured engines at Old Threshers in 1998.

It was nice to see the Dan Moss story and picture of his oldest 2 HP model A Sparta Economy in a recent GEM issue. Interestingly, about the same time I re-

ceived a letter from Don Morgan of Shelby, North Carolina, about his 2 HP with serial number 787. It is sure surprising at just how many of the Sparta Economy engines are still around. I have 404 on my list now.

At the sale mentioned earlier, there was an original Sparta Economy model A engine circular. It is in color, measures 14" x 21," and is printed on both sides. It contains several excellent views of the engines along with specifications, commentary and other details about the new Sears-owned engine factory at Sparta, Michigan. It has been dated in early handwritten script, November 27, 1909. Hopefully, a large enough color copier can be located to reproduce this beautiful piece.

At the same sale a small folder entitled "Instructions for the Elkhart Magneto used on Economy Gasoline Engines" was purchased.

My good friend Keith Kinney has just come up with a small folder entitled "Instructions for Attaching 1½ Horse Power Hercules Engine to Following Binders: Acme, Champion, Deering, John Deere, Walter A. Wood, Milwaukee, Osborne, Plano, and McCormick."

Interest in Hercules built engines and memorabilia is still very much alive and well. ○