

Hercules Engine News

*Including Economy, Arco,
Jaeger & Thermoil*

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Over the past several years the Hercules Engine News column has covered many subjects relating to Hercules, Economy, ARCO, Jaeger and Thermoil engines. These were all manufactured beginning in January 1914 by what began as the Hercules Gas Engine Company. The gas engine company was formed in November, 1912.

The Hercules Gas Engine Company didn't happen by chance, nor was it started by a "wanta be" in the engine business. It was started by the request of people in charge of the Holm Machine Manufacturing Company of Sparta,

Michigan. The Holm Company started manufacturing Economy engines in 1909 for Sears, Roebuck and Company. There were certain problems at Sparta that caused Sears, in early 1912, to search elsewhere for a suitable gas engine supplier. They contacted William McCurdy, who owned the Hercules Buggy Company. The buggy company was the major supplier of buggies that were sold through the Sears mail order catalogs.

The continuing story to begin in the next issue of GEM will go into detail in regard to the Holm Machine Manufacturing Company and the models of Economy engines that were built there. These stories will be entitled "The SPARTA ECONOMY ENGINE NEWS", but don't be surprised if a new or interesting Hercules story gets thrown in once in a while.

Meanwhile, I would like to leave you with a mind-boggler. Back in the early

part of the century, Sears, Roebuck & Company was the major retailer in the country and doing it all by mail order. Their catalogs, issued twice a year, contained 1200 to 1500 pages. Add to this, periodic sale catalogs. Listed on these pages were thousands of items. Many of these items came in sizes, styles, colors and in varying quantities. Add to this hundreds of suppliers. Then add the thousands of people all over the United States, then some foreign countries, who were sending mail orders. Many of these orders were poorly done in one way or another. Items often had to be back ordered or had been discontinued. Items were stored and shipped from many different locations. There were no computers and very few calculating devices. Much of the country had no telephone service. The big question is, "How did Sears manage to keep track of all of this?" I am sure that it would be interesting to know. ○