

## The Hercules Engine News

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Do you remember the June 1992 issue of *Gas Engine Magazine*? That was the first issue of *GEM* to have the Hercules Engine News column in it. That was seven years ago. Since then the column has appeared in all but a couple of issues because of missed deadlines.

It has been an interesting and rewarding experience to hear from so many people about their Hercules and related engines. It has also been a learning experience. Many new and unknown little features or other tidbits of info have turned up. New literature has turned up.

The June 1992 issue featured a picture of a Hart Parr tractor that apparently was taken from advertising material of that time; however, that won't be the subject of this column.

In that first story a 6 HP model D Economy tank cooled engine was shown. That still is the only one that I

have actually seen. I have heard of a couple of others, but they did not have all the original equipment. Their whereabouts is currently unknown. I did receive copies of literature that shows the parts peculiar to the tank cooled. I also have a copy of the cart plans and the buzz saw setup for these.

Construction of the Hercules Gas Engine Company buildings started early in 1913; they were complete and equipped so that, according to newspaper articles, the first engines were produced the week of January 19, 1914. It is not clear as to whether these were actually the Hercules-built D models or the assembly of the last of the Sparta type Economy engines.

Although the Hercules factory buildings still stand, much modification has taken place and it continues yet today. Several small industrial supply businesses occupy what was once the machine shop area. There was a fire in the old buggy works building, but damage was slight. The old power plant is being dismantled and will soon be history.

BUT history lives on. There seems to be a growing interest and demand for the Hercules and related engines. What color do you paint them? How do you time them? What year was it made?

Where can I get parts? Who has the decals available? I can buy one, but how much is it worth? These are among the many questions that are asked.

Many years ago, I stated making notes about Hercules and related engines that I saw at shows. That led to recording and listing all the engines I saw. Then people would call or write giving info on their engines and the list continued to grow. The list now totals 3,249 Hercules and related engines. I suppose that I will keep adding to the list. It is reasonable to assume that there are two, three or four times this many out there that I know nothing about. It is really not what could be called a registry, but rather, just one man's hobby that has gotten out of hand.

Just recently a call came from a man in Texas who is involved in the Cummins engine business down there. He was looking for items of Cummins history and there is some connection with the Hercules Gas Engine Company that is necessary to help fill in the story. I discovered about 100 pages of material relative to Cummins.

Lord willing, the column will continue with more information about the Hercules built engines and their history.